the weekly Standard

MAY 12, 2008 • $3.95

HILLARY'S STRANGE NEW RESPECT
NOEMIE EMERY

JOHN McCAIN'S MENTOR

KEN RINGLE remembers his high school classmate and their inspirational teacher, William Bee Ravenel III

Episcopal High School, Alexandria, Virginia, 1950s

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Energy Independence Isn't Very Green

Conflicting priorities are confusing policy

[I]n pleading the case for lowered oil consumption, energy security advocates gratefully accepted a new rationale — concerns about climate change. In 1973, those concerns were barely a blip on the political radar screen, but they have grown steadily since about 1988. "Stop global warming" has become a remarkably effective rallying cry, even inspiring award-winning documentaries and TV specials. Commercial interests have also latched onto this movement. Automobile makers find it easier to market gas-electric hybrid cars in the interest of saving the planet from excessive warming rather than saving the country from Middle Eastern extremists. The ethanol lobby, too, identifies its raison d'être more with greening the planet than with energy security. Combating climate change somehow seems more inclusive and less confrontational than mere energy security. For all these reasons, advocates of the latter (let's call them the "oil independents") have eagerly accepted a strategic partnership with the climate change establishment (the "climate greens"). Unfortunately, however, the partnership rests on unstable ground.

—Steve Stein

Taxing Private Equity

Anomalies of a Byzantine tax code

The House bill is yet another reminder of the problem of having different tax rates for different types of income. Whenever capital gains are taxed at a different rate from so-called ordinary income (or corporate income, for that matter), economic resources will be devoted to reclassifying income. Fewer and similar rates of tax would reduce the resources wasted trying to game the system. In the case of capital gains tax, it is a moot point whether the rate should be lower or higher than ordinary income tax or indeed whether it should be taxed at all. Since its introduction in 1921, no other tax has attracted as much controversy or been changed as often by Congress. Carried interests may be the most economically efficient way to reward private equity managers, but the form of remuneration should be decided on its economic merits, not to satisfy some legal definition of income.

—Adam Creighton

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Smooth Operator

Like a moth to the flame, The Scrapbook is unable to resist the temptation to read the acknowledgments in books before wrestling with the text.

In the old days—that is, before Baby Boomers started publishing—acknowledgments, if they appeared at all, tended to be brief, straightforward notes of thanks to librarians, archivists, and fellow scholars, or reports of permission to reprint illustrations—that sort of thing. Then tributes to spouses started to creep in ("my thanks also to Mandy, who has lived with Napoleon longer than Josephine ever did"), followed by creepy parental declarations ("I was devouring books about telecommunications when I should have been reading *Make Way for Ducklings* to you"), and the floodgates were open.

Now, acknowledgments are like a bad Oscars speech—multipaged exercises in self-congratulation ("During the past 18 months I have interviewed literally hundreds of women who have undergone breast augmentation surgery"), oh-so-subtle name-dropping ("Alice, Nathan, Hugo, my former roommate and best friend George Stephanopoulos"), not-very-persuasive self-deprecation ("who saved me from my tendency to get too passionate about health care legislation"), and credential porn ("I first heard the name 'Jacques Derrida' in Paul de Man's honors semiotics course at Yale").

Like olives, we concede, acknowledgments are an acquired taste; but The Scrapbook believes that readers will, with a little encouragement, share our enthusiasm for this, um, unacknowledged art form.

To that end, allow us to offer a world-class introductory sample, the four-page acknowledgments essay from Fareed Zakaria's latest volume, *The Post-American World*. Anyone who has read Mr. Zakaria's previous works, or who devours his column in *Newsweek*, will know that the 259 pages of text in *The Post-American World* can be boiled down to one sentence: "The United States used to be an important country, but we've screwed up everything, and now we live in an increasingly complex, interdependent world that will leave America in the dust."

Having digested that important insight, let's move on to the good stuff, because Zakaria's latest acknowledgments essay is a classic specimen of genuine self-infatuation ("This book is an outgrowth of much travel, reading, and reflection over the last few years, but it is also the product of passion") and false humility ("I have professional obligations that are often quite demanding but the hardest part of working on this project—by far—was retreating into my study when my kids wanted to spend time with me. I hope I struck a decent balance between family, work, and the book").

There are the obligatory fawning references ("Before I came to *Newsweek*, I had always heard that Donald Graham was an extraordinary boss and I'm happy to report from personal experience that it's true"), cringe-inducing clichés ("Drake McFeely, my editor, is a class act"), and product placements ("Three years ago, I launched a television show on PBS, *Foreign Exchange*").

In The Scrapbook's experience, however, this is the first such essay in which the shark who secured the author's offshore royalties is acknowledged ("Cullen Stanley has been wonderful at handling the book's foreign rights"). Best of all, there is a sentence we would like to think is supposed to be a joke, but is probably not: "Daniel Kurtz-Phelan read the whole thing and smoothened out the prose." Alas! If only Daniel Kurtz-Phelan *had* read the whole thing and guarded against words like "smoothened." ♦

Speak Up

When George W. Bush spoke at the Pentagon on March 19 to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, he said: "There is an understandable debate over whether the war was worth fighting, whether the fight is worth winning, and whether we can win it. The answers are clear to me: Removing Saddam Hussein from power was the right decision—and this is a fight America can and must win."

The Bush administration, alas, is losing this debate. It may be clear to Bush that the war was worth fighting, but it is not clear to an increasing number of Americans. A month after that speech, a Gallup poll found that a record number of Americans—63 percent—believe the war was a mistake.

One reason, perhaps, is that while the administration continues to claim that Iraq was the central front in the war on terror, it simply asserts this to be true, without citing any of the (increasingly voluminous) evidence. Bush's speech at the Pentagon that day was billed as a major address about the "Global War on Terror." And yet he devoted one thin line to convincing Americans that removing Saddam Hussein was part of that war. "Because we acted, Saddam's regime is no longer paying the families of suicide bombers in the Holy Land."

It's not for lack of evidence that Bush did not say more. Thankfully, some elected officials, tired of waiting for the White House to lead on the issue, are stepping forward. Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona wrote an April 22 column for

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(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of June 11, 2001)

RealClearPolitics on the recent Pentagon report that "confirmed yet again" the fact that "Saddam Hussein actively supported and financed terrorist activities during the years he controlled Iraq."

Kyl continued:

> The report found that Saddam Hussein worked with several different terrorist groups, including groups with direct ties to al Qaeda, and many were engaged in a jihad against the U.S. and its allies. The report shed light on the relationship between Saddam Hussein and Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's second in command: "Saddam supported groups either associated directly with al Qaeda (such as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), led at one time by bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri) or that generally shared al Qaeda's stated goals and objectives."

And last Friday, after the *Washington Post*'s Dana Milbank claimed that there was "no evidence" of Iraqi ties to al Qaeda, Kyl fired off a letter to the editor to correct him. (The newspaper itself offered no correction, despite the fact that Milbank's claim is indisputably false.)

At least part of the reason 63 percent of Americans believe the Iraq war was a mistake is that they no longer believe Saddam Hussein was a threat. This might be the result of the White House's eagerness to boast about, say, a new dental office in Diwaniya, while at the same time refusing to comment on the fact that the Iraqi regime was supporting al Qaeda's second in command. John McCain, whose candidacy is dependent to some extent on what voters think of the Iraq war, has not mentioned the new Pentagon report either.

Jon Kyl 2012? ♦

The Anxiety of Imagined Influence

The *New Republic*'s staff seems to be taking a lot of pride in their magazine's influence, real or not. After *Time*'s May 5 cover appeared—an Obama/Hillary montage with the headline, "There Can Be Only One"—the *New Republic* blog assumed its usual tone of high dudgeon: "We don't want to say that this week's cover of *Time* is a rip-off of our HillarAck cover that came out last month, but—oh, whatever—they *totally ripped us off*! All the way on down to the cover line, too: 'There Can Only Be One' vs. 'We Have To Choose One.'"

Others, however, recognized in that *Time* cover the ubiquitous marketing campaign for the NBA playoffs. Rick Stengel, *Time*'s managing editor, politely pointed this out: "If those wonderfully wonky folks at TNR . . . watched a little more of the NBA, they would realize that the inspiration for this week's cover was the striking ad campaign the NBA is using for the playoffs. In fact, we say so on the magazine's index page."

"Wonderfully wonky" must be a nice way of saying totally self-absorbed. ♦

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Casual

Prom Night

Every spring in Washington, a ritual commences with the predictability of the cherry blossoms blooming around the Tidal Basin or the silvery hickory shad making their spawning run up the Potomac. Frumpy reporters put on their party heels and enshroud their hunchbacks in Men's Wearhouse tuxedos, welcome a cavalcade of so many B-list stars that it feels like *The Love Boat* without Dramamine, and pack the ballroom of the Washington Hilton, a.k.a. "the Hinckley Hilton" where Ronald Reagan nearly met his end, for the annual White House Correspondents' Association Dinner. All of this is to celebrate their favorite cause: themselves.

The media being the media, however, they can never celebrate anything—even themselves—without feeling lousy about it. So after plunking down thousands for tables, after spending months maneuvering for tickets to the right after-party, after keeping calendars clear so that they're not on assignment during Prom, as it's often called, the default posture of roughly 80 percent of the crowd is that the dinner is beneath them. They feign disgust at the preening, the pomposity, the oily social calibration that is at once obsequious and pretentious. How this differs from your average episode of *Countdown with Keith Olbermann* has never been entirely clear to me.

Therefore, mindful of La Rochefoucauld's maxim that "it is our own vanity that makes the vanity of others intolerable to us," I've managed to attend for 12 straight angst-free years. Along with my friends—a loose coalition of media types who keep getting older but whose emotional maturity stays lodged at 22 years of age—we have found the keys to successful attendance.

I part with these secrets reluctantly, since when I lecture in schools, I like to tell the kids not to drink unless it's for a very good reason, like making the pain stop. But our twofold approach is simple: (a) Have no shame, and (b) ingest copious amounts of free hooch. Neither is usually a problem for us. We are, after all, journalists. Doing these things is like body surfing with a wave, rather than swimming against it. It has gotten us through the dinner, the after-parties, the after-after-parties, and our super-secret triple-after-party, which we like to call "breakfast."

SCOTT MATTHEWS

One of the joys of the dinner is watching the regular Washington hierarchy get upended. The usual administration and chat-show hacks who pass for celebrities in D.C. now have to contend with those of the Hollywood variety, knocking them down a peg in the social order. It is always a joy to see a grown man interrupt his conversation with Condoleezza Rice to exclaim, "Hey, it's the fat guy from *Survivor*!"

Therefore, I tend to collect memorable celebrity encounters like scalps, afterwards putting them in my Special Memories box. I've gotten buzzed with Sean Penn, when we swapped stories about his former relative, B-1 Bob Dornan (his brother was married to Dornan's daughter). And I have told Dana Delaney that I work for the most influential organ in the history of political thought, which she seemed to believe, though she'd never heard of us.

I've made small talk with Elle Macpherson, who affected cool detachment but who clearly wanted to take me home and ravish me, though I couldn't, because I'm married and not into shallow supermodels. I've been bullied by Donald Trump. After traveling with him as he explored a Reform party presidential candidacy, I wrote a piece unfortunately titled "A Chump on the Stump." Months later when I encountered him at the dinner, he said, "I think you know what I think of you—not much. Now head out." When I remarked that he couldn't kick me out of a party that wasn't his, he headed out. I've always respected him for that. It was classy, as he would say.

I've held Bo Derek's hand, while cooing, "There are two kinds of people in this world. Those who understand [her 1984 softcore film] *Bolero* and those who don't. Bo, I understand." Her smile said, "Thank you," while her eyes said, "Security!" And after I asked Heidi Klum how to tell the difference between a supermodel and just a really swell model, she cocked her head like an adorably confused puppy. I wanted to take her to PetSmart, to buy her a soft toy with a bell in it.

Often, during these encounters, I do most of the talking, figuring after so many years of taking from celebrities, it's my turn to give back. Sure, their attention, even if commandeered, appeals to my vanity. But so what? As Mark Twain wrote, "There are no grades of vanity, there are only grades of ability in concealing it."

Matt Labash

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Study the Tribes

Stanley Kurtz is to be congratulated for his article on Middle East tribal culture ("I and My Brother Against My Cousin," April 14), as is Philip Salzman for his book on the subject, *Culture and Conflict in the Middle East*.

Left unaddressed, however, is the critical issue of American ignorance of the subject. Scholars like Bernard Lewis of Princeton were very clear and up front about the kind of culture we were dealing with years ago. We didn't listen then. Precious few are listening now. A large part of the limited success of General Petraeus is due to the fact that he listened, at least on the military front.

Americans, many in the highest government positions, just cannot seem to accept the notion that there can be a culture so different that violence is a part of everyday life. We overlook the fact that Arab culture can be sophisticated and violent at the same time. Armed by our wealth through oil, the jihadists see no reason why their culture should not overtake ours inevitably, and they have been proven very patient.

Hopefully more Americans will take the time to study the important work of scholars like Stanley Kurtz, Philip Salzman, and Bernard Lewis.

Wayne G. Skaggs
Wimberley, Tex.

McCainomics

I found Irwin Stelzer's assessment of John McCain's options and predilections for economic policy generally compelling ("Embrace Your Inner Teddy Roosevelt," April 21). Stelzer rightly insists on overcoming the dogmatic free market advice of Phil Gramm as central to McCain's confronting the fallout from Glass-Steagall's repeal. But there is one crucial element of John McCain's personal experience that Stelzer did not bring into the discussion.

There once was a man named Charles Keating, and an enormous government bailout of the savings and loan industry was a result of the same forces of moral hazard Stelzer describes at play today. John McCain saw the savings and loan meltdown close up. He saw how easy it is for a well-meaning legislator to go to bat for a crook—persuaded every step of the way that his intervention against those overbearing regulators was justified by the need to keep the government from riding on the back of the defenseless entrepreneur.

McCain saw the whole mechanism up close and personal. What did he learn from the experience? Did he see how one really needs to use regulation to cure market imperfections? And if his

experience with the Keating Five was not enough to make the lesson sink in, what hope can we have that the sensible and sober advice in Stelzer's column will do the trick?

John Carragee
Wayne, Penn.

Nuclear Necessity

Alternative energy sources with their interest groups and enthusiasts have found a level of popularity unsubstantiated by their technologies' performance, as William Tucker demonstrates in his article "Food Riots Made in the USA" (April 28). These technologies, although quite useful in appropriate settings, have little connection to their exaggerated claims and are not supported by agricultural, engineering, and societal realities. Tucker is right that "bad old nuclear power" is one of the few options we have to both minimize pollution and deal with climate change, and does not also result in the unintended consequences of taking food from people's mouths or using large quantities of the land they live on.

What is truly telling is that the rest of the world is not waiting for the United States to make up its mind to start building the first nuclear plant in 30 years. There are currently over 30 new plants under construction, with most of those in Asia where economic growth is in the double digits. Finland and France are building reactors, and Russia has five in the works. The world recognizes the necessity of nuclear energy, while in our country we are playing games that adversely affect the price of food.

Michael Corradini
Madison, Wisc.

A Capital Cartoonist

It was nice to see The Scrapbook recognize Michael Ramirez in the April 21 issue for receiving the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartoons.

Upon receiving each issue of The Weekly Standard, his political cartoon is the first thing I look for, always a great drawing and always capturing the essence of the message by his skillful illustration.

Paul Donofro
Marianna, Fla.

Correction

Ryan T. Anderson's review "Caution, Children" (April 28) incorrectly identified David Tubbs, author of *Freedom's Orphans*, as a professor at King's College in Cambridge. Tubbs teaches at King's College in New York City.

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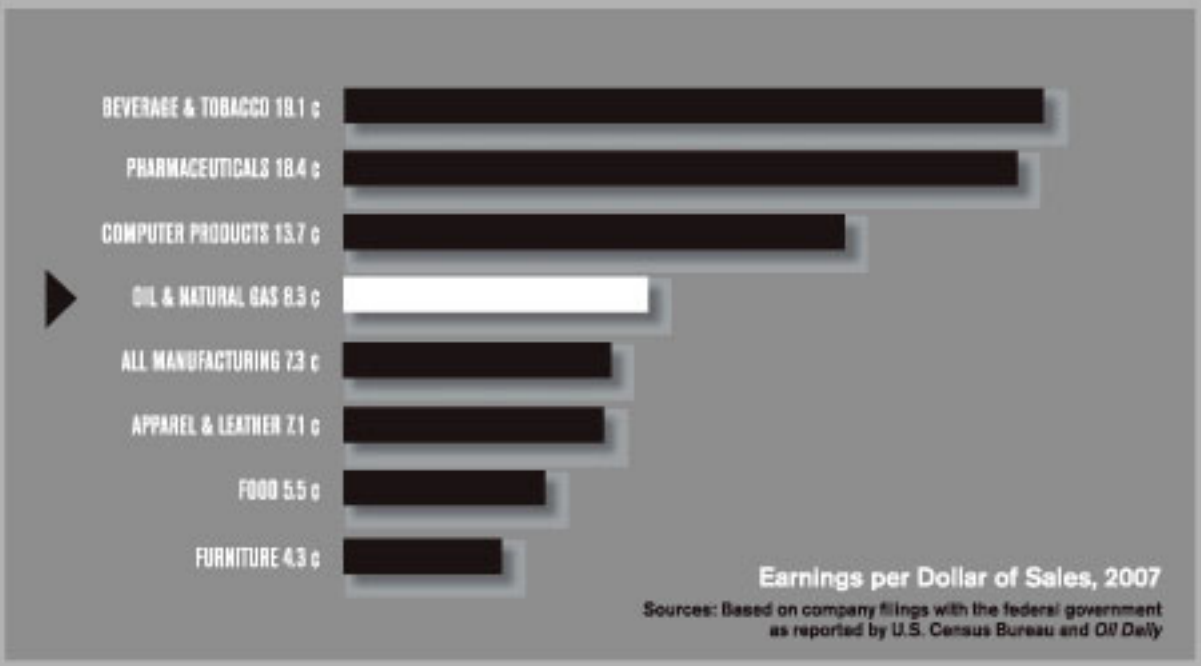
Straight talk on earnings



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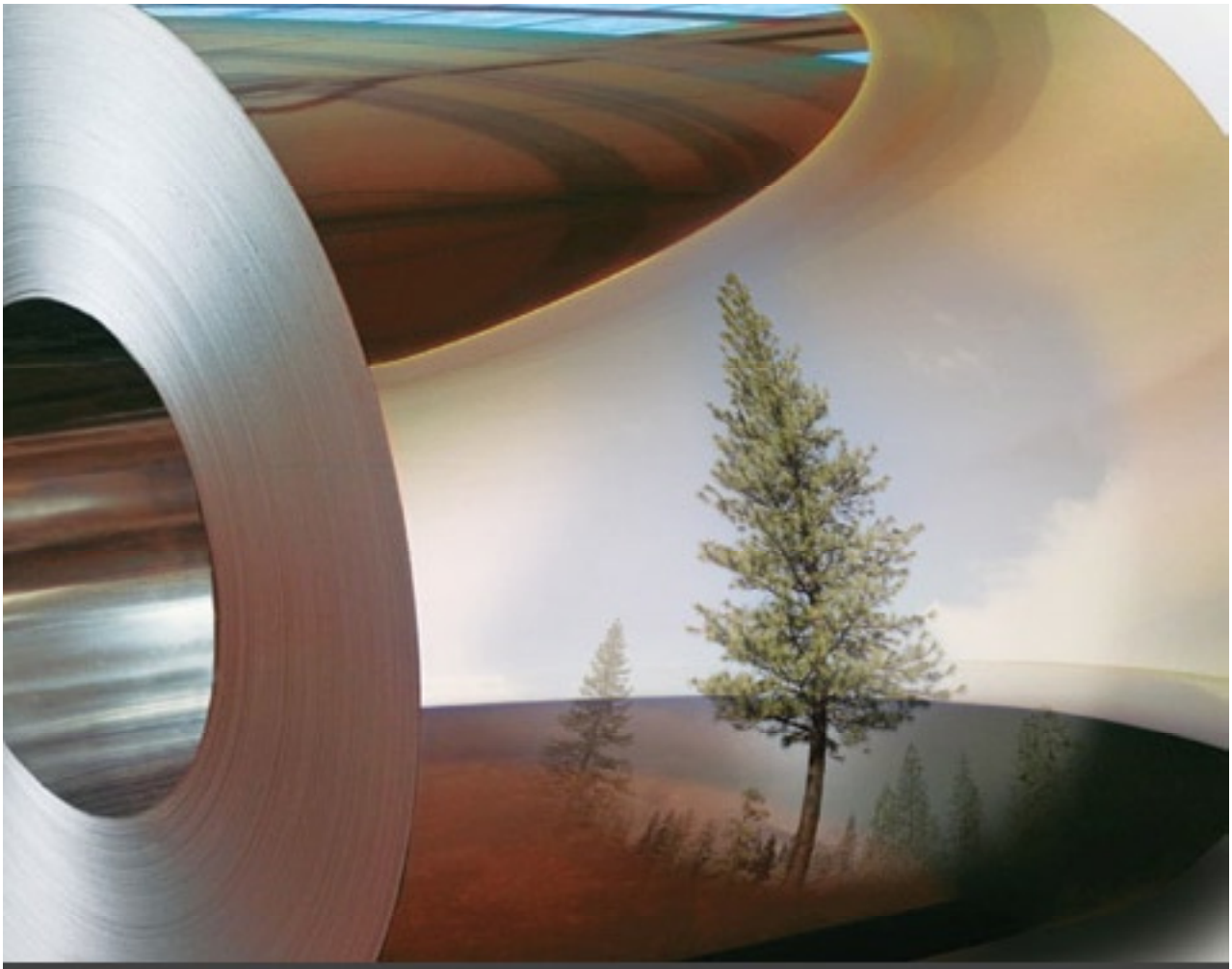

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the weekly Standard

Right about Obama

Last week's highly entertaining episode of the Jeremiah Wright Show didn't tell us anything new about the demagogic reverend. He stands by his sick notion that American foreign policy and jihadist terrorism are equivalent, his defense of Louis Farrakhan, and his wacky conspiracy theory that the AIDS virus was cooked up by the federal government.

But we did gain a new perspective on Wright's former parishioner, Senator Barack Obama. And it's not flattering. It took the Democratic frontrunner 20 years—and 50 days since videos surfaced of Wright's incendiary sermons—to discover that the man who helped him become a Christian, officiated at his marriage, and baptized his two daughters is a conspiracy theory-loving self-publicizer. What does that say about Obama's "judgment," on which he largely bases his claim to the presidency?

Worse, one of the main reasons for Obama's unequivocal split from Wright had nothing to do with the reverend's hateful ideology. You see, Wright had the temerity to suggest that Barack Obama is just another pol. "What I think particularly angered me was his suggestion somehow that my previous denunciations of his remarks were somehow political posturing," Obama said. This only confirms Obama's reputation for being thin-skinned and self-absorbed. Go ahead and count the "I"s and "my"s in this passage from his news conference:

> In some ways, what Reverend Wright said yesterday directly contradicts everything that I've done during my life. It contradicts how I was raised and the setting in which I was raised. It contradicts my decisions to pursue a career of public service. It contradicts the issues that I've worked on politically. It contradicts what I've said in my books. It contradicts what I said in my convention speech in 2004. It contradicts my announcement. It contradicts everything that I've been saying on the campaign trail.

Obama's problem is that Reverend Wright is the same as he's always been. Indeed, during the first sermon Obama ever heard Wright deliver, the reverend spoke of a planet where "white folks' greed runs a world in need." Didn't that contradict how Obama was raised? Why wasn't he "outraged" then? In 2007 Reverend Wright referred to the "United States of White America" in one sermon and later presented a lifetime achievement award to Farrakhan. Didn't that run against "everything" that Obama had been saying on the campaign trail? Yet that year the Obamas gave more than $25,000 to Wright's church. Talk about contradictions.

It's not Wright but Obama who has changed. He has changed his position on his former friend time and time again:

- "These days, [Obama] says, he attends the 11 a.m. Sunday service at Trinity . . . every week. . . . His pastor, Wright, has become a close confidant." (*Chicago Sun-Times*, April 5, 2004)
- "'Senator Obama is proud of his pastor and his church.'" (Obama campaign statement reported in the *New York Times*, April 30, 2007)
- "[Wright] is like an old uncle who sometimes will say things I don't agree with." (February 25, 2008)
- "I don't think that my church is actually particularly controversial." (March 2, 2008)
- "I can no more disown [Wright] than I can disown the black community." (March 18, 2008)
- "I am outraged by the comments that were made and saddened over the spectacle that we saw yesterday. . . . The person I saw yesterday was not the person that I met 20 years ago." (April 29, 2008)

What is going on here? There are only two possible answers. One is that Obama has had a revelation. He says he gave Wright the "benefit of the doubt" until he watched the April 28 performance at the National Press Club. That shocked his conscience. The scales fell from his eyes.

But at the press club, Wright was simply repeating things that have been on cable news for weeks—statements that Obama said previously were a "caricature" of an otherwise impressive man. The difference between then and now is that Wright has "amplified" those statements—thus inconveniencing Obama.

The other answer is that Wright is correct. Obama is doing whatever it takes to appeal to 51 percent of the population in any given place at any given time. Early on in Chicago, an association with Wright gave Obama cachet in the community. Now that association is undermining his presidential candidacy. Therefore it must end.

Needless to say, this isn't the best message for someone running on a platform of "change." Which is why Obama has called the Wright affair a "distraction." It is anything but. In his own way, Wright has done his country a favor. He has deflated the balloon that was Obamamania. He has exploded the pretense that Barack Obama is somehow different from all the other talented, flawed, ambitious, vainglorious men and women who have sought the presidency.

—Matthew Continetti, for the Editors

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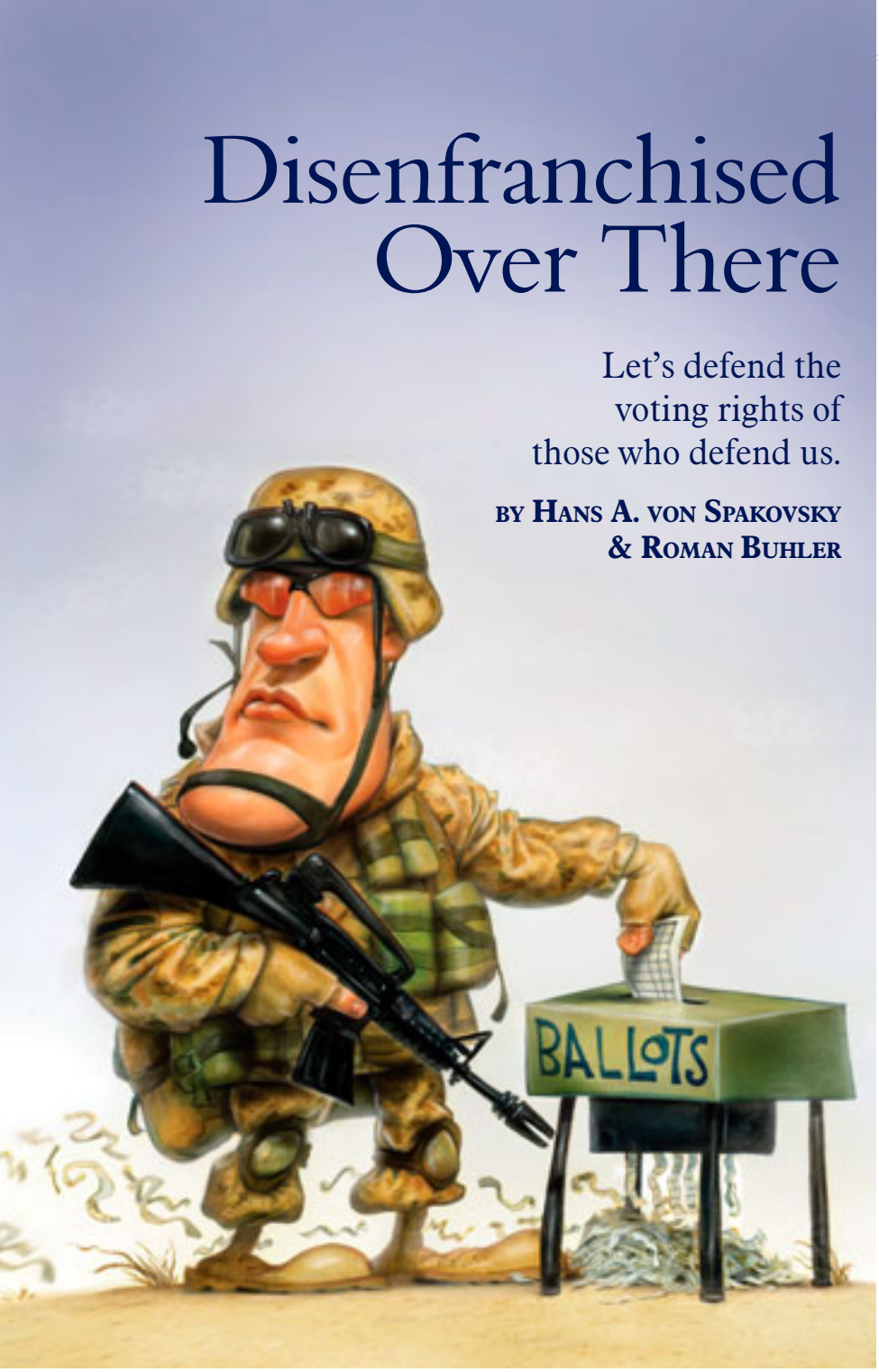
Disenfranchised Over There

Let's defend the voting rights of those who defend us.

BY HANS A. VON SPAKOVSKY & ROMAN BUHLER



GARY LOCKE

Over the past 40 years, starting with the historic Voting Rights Act of 1965, Congress has sought to guarantee the right of every American citizen to vote. But there is still a large and significant group of Americans who are needlessly disenfranchised: the millions of men and women who serve abroad in our armed forces.

A survey by the Election Assistance Commission shows that of almost 1 million ballots requested in the last election by overseas and military voters, only about one third were successfully cast and counted. The most common reasons for this failure were that the requested ballots sent to voters were returned as "undeliverable" and that marked ballots were received too late to be counted.

Military personnel based outside the United States are still dependent on the mail to receive and cast their ballots. When an election official sends a ballot overseas, it can take three weeks (or more) to reach a soldier in Iraq or a sailor on a ship halfway around the world. Even if the soldier or sailor completes the ballot immediately, it may take another three weeks to get back. Many ballots simply do not get home in time.

The Pentagon spent millions on a high-tech solution that transmitted ballots over the Internet, but abandoned the effort because of serious security risks. Some states now allow completed ballots to be faxed to election officials from overseas voters, but many soldiers in the field don't have access to fax machines, and faxing ballots imperils the secrecy of the vote. Some states also allow ballots postmarked overseas before the date of the election to be received, unlike all other ballots, after the close of polls. Unfortunately, given the unreliability of some overseas postal authorities, this poses significant risk of fraudulently postmarked ballots, especially in a very close election.

Republican congressman Kevin McCarthy has just introduced the Military Voting Protection Act, which would require the Pentagon to collect absentee ballots overseas and deliver them stateside by express air transport. This could shorten the delivery time for overseas ballots from three weeks to only four days. It would mean that many thousands of ballots that were rejected in 2004 would count in 2008.

A more comprehensive solution, though, could be crafted from the historical example of the first absentee ballots cast by American soldiers. The election of 1864 was held in the middle of a civil war when large numbers of voters were fighting in the field. Wisconsin decided to allow its

Hans A. von Spakovsky is a former commissioner on the Federal Election Commission. Roman Buhler is a former elections counsel for the House Administration Committee.

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soldiers to vote absentee, and other states quickly followed suit. Rather than a slow and cumbersome ballot-by-mail process, the states simply set up polling sites in the field encampments of their soldiers. This was easier to do in 1864 when soldiers in many military units came from only one state or community. But modern technology should be able to overcome any obstacles today.

Imagine a system where Congress and the states coordinated an effort to set up early voting sites at or near military installations all over the world. Once a voter provides proper identification that matches his or her name on the voter registration lists each state is required to maintain by the Help America Vote Act of 2002, an electronically uploaded ballot provided by that state could be printed out for the soldier. The ballots completed at each overseas early voting site could then be sent back to the appropriate election officials in the United States through express mail.

Except in extraordinary circumstances such as special forces teams in the field or sailors on ships far out at sea, ballots completed by the Friday before the election could be in the hands of local election officials by the close of polling on Election Day. Early voting sites and an express mail delivery system would enfranchise hundreds of thousands of military voters who today never get their vote counted.

And while establishing overseas early voting sites would take time, a system for express delivery of completed ballots from military bases and U.S. consulates could be implemented in 2008, if Congress and the president worked together. Surely, improving the voting rights of our men and women in uniform is a strong enough motivation.

Dwight Eisenhower, a general who went on to become president, once said that "the future of this republic is in the hands of the American voter." Those hands should include all of those who protect and defend this nation and fight to keep it free. ♦

Attack of the Pharmascolds

The self-righteous foes of industry-funded medical research. BY DAVID A. SHAYWITZ & THOMAS P. STOSSEL

Can bad companies fund good research? That's the question raised by recent reports of a promising new test for lung cancer, which turns out to have been developed with funding from a leading tobacco company.

The research in question was conducted by an investigator at Cornell Medical College who proposed that an imaging technique called spiral CT (computed tomography) can detect lung cancers early enough for surgeons to remove them, thereby preventing the tumor spread that kills affected patients.

Prior to the publication of this research in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, conventional wisdom held that preventing lung cancer deaths by early detection was impossible, a conclusion informed by a succession of failed attempts using older screening methods. Fueling this pessimism is the fact that, since smoking is the major cause of lung cancer,

David A. Shaywitz, an endocrinologist, is a management consultant in New Jersey. Thomas P. Stossel is American Cancer Society professor of medicine at Harvard and senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute.

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anti-tobacco activists worry, probably incorrectly, that any advance in lung cancer management might be misinterpreted to encourage smoking.

These forces of diagnostic nihilism got a boost from the *New York Times*, which splashed on its March 26 front page the news that the spiral CT researchers are "tainted" by conflicts of interest. The investigators received financing from a charitable foundation supported by the Liggett Group, a cigarette maker, and they allegedly failed to disclose patent applications concerning the spiral CT technology.

The attempt to discredit the CT researchers taps into reflexive beliefs that money and the profit motive determine the outcome of research. And, since tobacco companies are presumably evil incarnate, nothing they support can possibly be worthwhile.

This premise—that research supported by industry is inevitably corrupt, while academic research funded by the government is intrinsically pure—has been repeated so often by an impassioned cadre of medical journal editors and self-righteous academics (let's call them the pharmascolds) that it has assumed the patina of fact.

> If reporters took the care to evaluate the evidence, they might be surprised to learn that scientists—even academic researchers not receiving industry funding—have feet of clay. They can be as ambitious as CEOs and as covetous as hedge fund managers (if not more so).

Reporters have learned that they can generate a buzz by identifying corporate sponsorship of academic research and eliciting outraged soundbites from the pharmascolds, who are always ready to castigate the sinner in their midst while extolling their own implied virtue.

If reporters took the care to evaluate the evidence, they might be surprised to learn that scientists—even academic researchers not receiving industry funding—have feet of clay. They can be as ambitious as CEOs and as covetous as hedge fund managers (if not more so). Careful reporters might also discover that corporate sponsorship of research has proved highly beneficial for medical innovation. Industry-sponsored research enabled the introduction of cholesterol-lowering statin drugs, for example, contributing to spectacular declines in deaths due to heart attacks and strokes.

Instead of accusing researchers of taking "blood money" from corporations, we should be asking whether the Cornell findings hold up: Is the study methodologically sound? Has it been subjected to a peer review pro-

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cess? Have other researchers duplicated their results? These are the questions serious scientists ask when they review any research, regardless of who paid for it.

Perhaps not surprisingly, journalists seem more interested in advancing a facile "saints vs. sinners" story line than in challenging it, and their exposés tend to conform to a highly stylized, moralistic plot. Critics of the sponsored research (the pharmascolds) are described glowingly, while investigators with industry funding are routinely maligned.

The reporter covering the spiral CT story, for example, described the critics of the project's funding as "prominent cancer researchers and journal editors." But the Cornell scientists promoting it are also trained professionals who have (conflict of interest disclosure infractions aside) successfully run the gauntlet of peer review. The top Cornell administrator who approved the tobacco payments is also a distinguished physician-scientist.

In an astonishing example of anti-industry bias, the *Times* cited a medical journal editor declaring that she "would never publish a paper dealing with lung cancer from a person who had taken money from a tobacco company." Regardless of the merits of the technology or study design? Not even a *cure* for cancer? This is a sad commentary on what passes for "objectivity" among many of medicine's self-appointed moral guardians.

We neither smoke nor encourage others to do so. We don't forgive the tobacco industry's historical resistance to acknowledging smoking's health risks. We have no qualifications to judge whether spiral CT is a good medical value—and we have no financial interests in spiral CT.

But we do know this: If ongoing research shows that spiral CT prevents death from lung cancer, the finding will deserve celebration. Journalists should keep their eye on the ball and focus on the quality of the science rather than the character of its sponsors—and demand that pharmascolds do the same. ♦

South Africa Plays Ball with Dictators

So don't play ball in South Africa.

BY MARIAN L. TUPY & JAMES KIRCHICK

Friends of Zimbabwe have long hoped for a peaceful transfer of power in that country. But in spite of losing the March 29 elections to the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the regime of Robert Mugabe is clinging to power. Once again, the world's democracies look to Zimbabwe's southern neighbor to stem the growing violence against the Zimbabwean people unleashed by the ruling regime.

South Africa's president, Thabo Mbeki, however, maintains that there is "no crisis" in Zimbabwe. He has even ordered his U.N. representative to block debate about the situation in the Security Council, which South Africa currently chairs.

Indeed, far from facilitating peaceful change in Zimbabwe, South Africa's government has been complicit in violating the human rights and the democratically expressed will of Zimbabweans—which is why opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai has called on Mbeki to relinquish his role as the Southern African Development Community's designated mediator of the Zimbabwean crisis.

South Africa's and Zimbabwe's histories are closely intertwined. In the 1830s, Zulu tribesmen trekked north and settled in Zimbabwe's Matabeleland. Then it was settlers from the Cape who subdued the Matabeles and founded the Rhodesian colony. To this day, landlocked Zimbabwe relies on South African ports and, more important, energy supplies—such as electricity, which South Africa provides to Zimbabwe at a 36 percent discount. It is no stretch to say that South Africa could force regime change in Zimbabwe overnight.

Indeed, there is a precedent for this, back when South Africa was ruled by a white minority government and Zimbabwe was Rhodesia. In the late 1970s, reading the writing on the wall, apartheid prime minister B.J. Vorster cut off military and economic aid to Rhodesia's leader, Ian Smith, and told him to accept some form of majority rule. Without the backing of apartheid South Africa, a white-ruled Rhodesia couldn't stand, and a power-sharing agreement between blacks and whites soon followed in what became Zimbabwe.

Today the situation is no different. Without the support of South Africa, the continent's economic powerhouse, Mugabe could not hold onto power.

Therein lies the problem. South Africa has not only tolerated Mugabe, it has been complicit in keeping him in office. For years, Mbeki has enjoyed Western support as he pursues his vaunted "quiet diplomacy" in Zimbabwe. In those same years, Zimbabweans by the million have suffered from growing political repression and economic deterioration. Hundreds of thousands have died from the combined effects of HIV/AIDS and malnutrition.

Mbeki claims that a negotiated settlement is necessary to prevent Zimbabwe from collapsing, but collapse is closer today than in 2003, when President Bush called Mbeki his "point man" on Zimbabwe. Since then, a quarter of Zimbabwe's population has fled the country, inflation has risen to 150,000 percent, and unemployment

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has reached 80 percent. Longevity, in the mid-30s, is among the lowest in the world.

Election observers sent by the South African government endorsed Zimbabwe's parliamentary elections in 2000 and 2005 and the last presidential election, in 2002. Observers from free nations judged all three polls deeply flawed. A week after the presidential and parliamentary elections, Mbeki personally flew to Harare. There he held Mugabe's hand as they strolled down the tarmac and laughed as the Zimbabwean dictator insulted the British prime minister in front of the assembled press.

Two weeks ago, the South African government approved the transit to Zimbabwe of Chinese arms, including 3 million rounds of ammunition, from the port of Durban. No one doubts that the weapons were intended to aid the Zimbabwean military in quelling internal dissent. South African trade unions refused to unload the deadly cargo, and the Chinese vessel sailed away.

South Africa's policy toward Zimbabwe exposes a growing gap between the high-minded principles it claims to follow in foreign affairs and the sordid reality of its real-world machinations. Pretoria cozies up to Cuba, Iran, and Libya. At the U.N., it worked with China to prevent debate on human rights abuses in Burma. The country's intelligence minister visited Iran, where he praised Hezbollah and Hamas. In sum, Pretoria has yet to encounter an anti-Western tyrant it doesn't like.

Perhaps it is time for the West to respond. During apartheid, when South Africa denied the vast majority of its citizens their basic human rights, South Africa was banned from most international athletic competition. Today, as athletes and politicians around the world weigh the pros and cons of attending the Beijing Olympics, they should also reconsider their attendance at the World Cup to be hosted by South Africa in 2010.

Some might question the wisdom of upsetting good relations with Pretoria over Zimbabwe. What we advocate, however, is not an official ban on playing in South Africa. Rather, we call on civil society—independent organizations and individual players—to begin a public debate about the suitability of South Africa as a host for the World Cup. Conceivably, such a debate could shame Pretoria into taking a tougher line against Mugabe.

Since the end of white minority rule in South Africa in 1994, the ANC government has enjoyed a great deal of goodwill in the world. South Africa is the favorite venue for international conferences and sporting events, and the government has high hopes for the World Cup. But it is harder and harder to reconcile South Africa's elevated status with Pretoria's friendliness toward odious dictatorships. A little controversy, therefore, might usefully draw to the attention of President Mbeki and his government that their human rights record increasingly resembles that of the Rainbow Nation's infamous predecessor. ♦

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The Silent Scream of the Asparagus

Get ready for 'plant rights.'

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

You just *knew* it was coming: At the request of the Swiss government, an ethics panel has weighed in on the "dignity" of plants and opined that the arbitrary killing of flora is morally wrong. This is no hoax. The concept of what could be called "plant rights" is being seriously debated.

A few years ago the Swiss added to their national constitution a provision requiring "account to be taken of the dignity of creation when handling animals, plants and other organisms." No one knew exactly what it meant, so they asked the Swiss Federal Ethics Committee on Non-Human Biotechnology to figure it out. The resulting report, "The Dignity of Living Beings with Regard to Plants," is enough to short circuit the brain.

A "clear majority" of the panel adopted what it called a "biocentric" moral view, meaning that "living organisms should be considered morally for their own sake because they are alive." Thus, the panel determined that we cannot claim "absolute ownership" over plants and, moreover, that "individual plants have an inherent worth." This means that "we may not use them just as we please, even if the plant community is not in danger, or if our actions do not endanger the species, or if we are not acting arbitrarily."

The committee offered this illustration: A farmer mows his field (apparently an acceptable action, perhaps because the hay is intended to feed the farmer's herd—the report doesn't say). But then, while walking home, he casually "decapitates" some wildflowers with his scythe. The panel decries this act as immoral, though its members can't agree why. The report states, opaquely:

> At this point it remains unclear whether this action is condemned because it expresses a particular moral stance of the farmer toward other organisms or because something bad is being done *to the flowers themselves*.

What is clear, however, is that Switzerland's enshrining of "plant dignity" is a symptom of a cultural disease that has infected Western civilization, causing us to lose the ability to think critically and distinguish serious from frivolous ethical concerns. It also reflects the triumph of a radical anthropomorphism that views elements of the natural world as morally equivalent to people.

Why is this happening? Our accelerating rejection of the Judeo-Christian world view, which upholds the unique dignity and moral worth of human beings, is driving us crazy. Once we knocked our species off its pedestal, it was only logical that we would come to see fauna and flora as entitled to rights.

The intellectual elites were the first to accept the notion of "speciesism," which condemns as invidious discrimination treating people differently from animals simply because they are human beings. Then ethical criteria were needed for assigning

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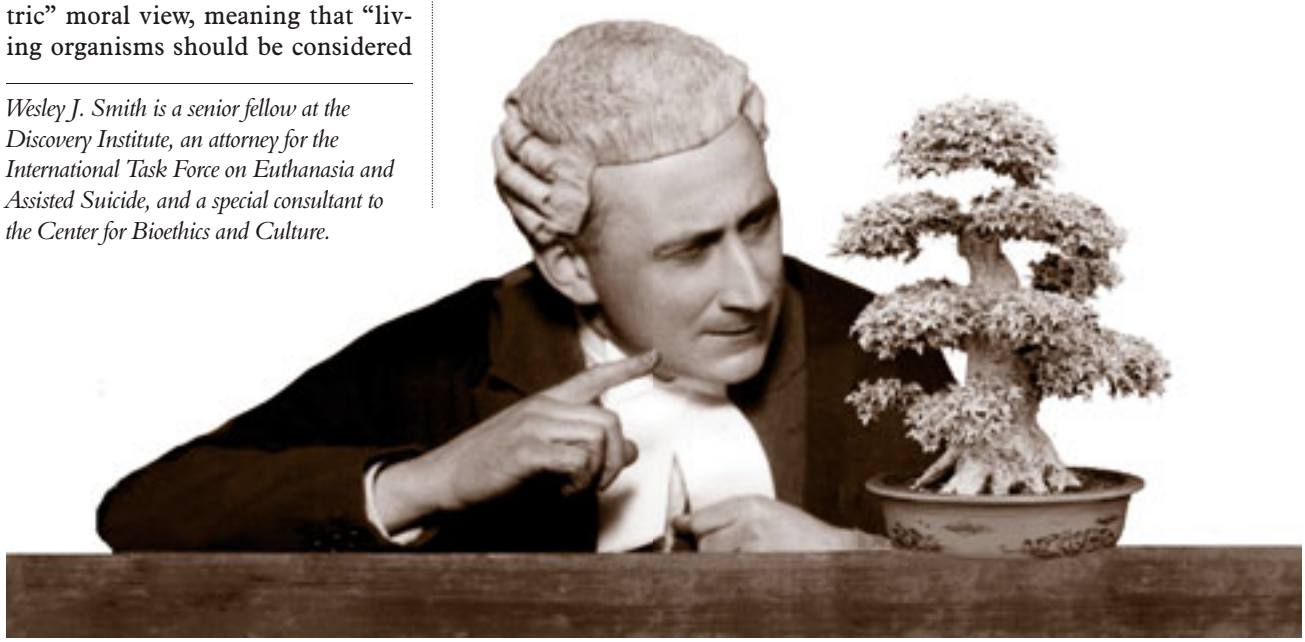

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moral worth to individuals, be they human, animal, or now vegetable.

Rising to the task, leading bioethicists argue that for a human, value comes from possessing sufficient cognitive abilities to be deemed a "person." This excludes the unborn, the newborn, and those with significant cognitive impairments, who, personhood theorists believe, do not possess the right to life or bodily integrity. This thinking has led to the advocacy in prestigious medical and bioethical journals of using profoundly brain impaired patients in medical experimentation or as sources of organs.

The animal rights movement grew out of the same poisonous soil. Animal rights ideology holds that moral worth comes with sentience or the ability to suffer. Thus, since both animals and humans feel pain, animal rights advocates believe that what is done to an animal should be judged morally as if it were done to a human being. Some ideologues even compare the Nazi death camps to normal practices of animal husbandry. For example, Charles Patterson wrote in *Eternal Treblinka*—a book specifically endorsed by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—that "the road to Auschwitz begins at the slaughterhouse."

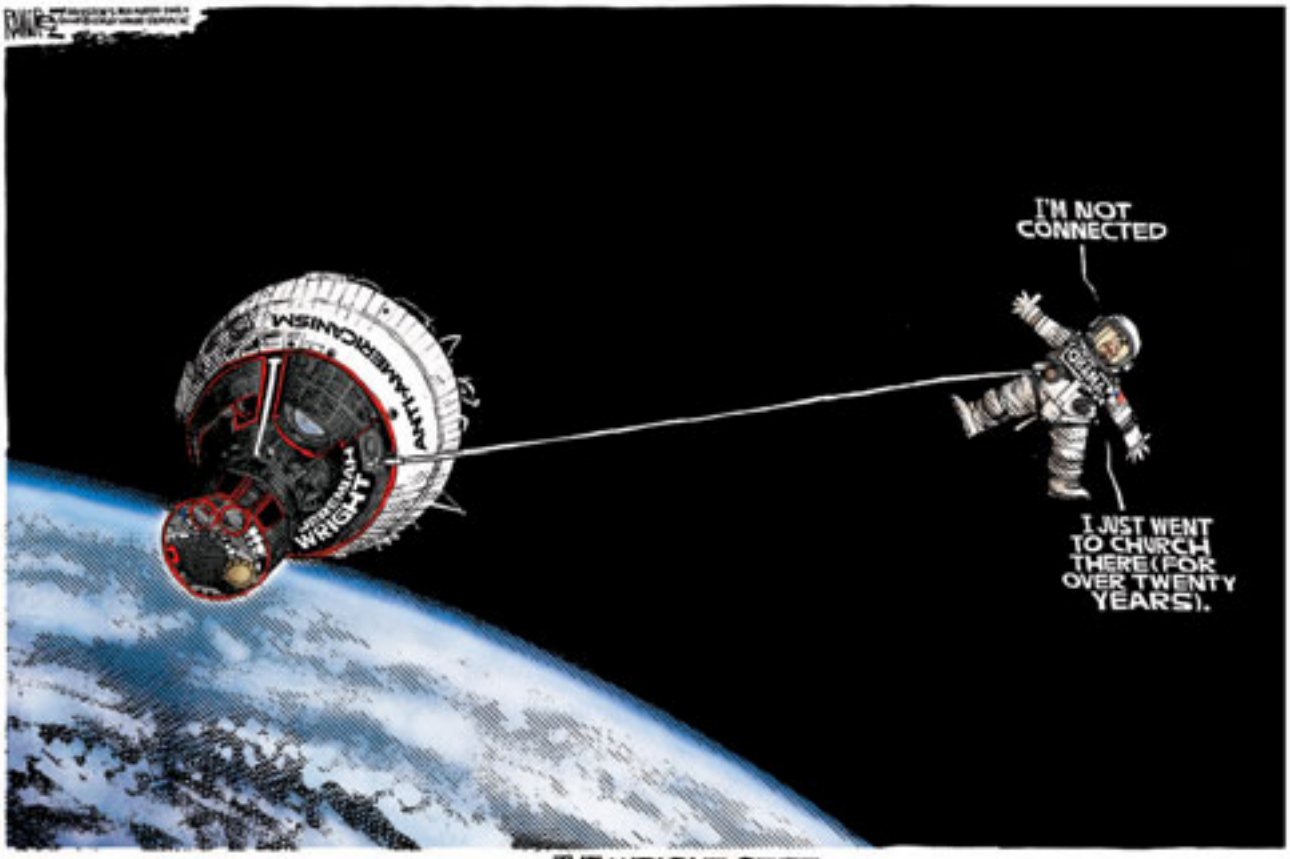
Eschewing humans as the pinnacle of "creation" (to borrow the term used in the Swiss constitution) has caused environmentalism to mutate from conservationism—a concern to properly steward resources and protect pristine environs and endangered species—into a willingness to thwart human flourishing to "save the planet." Indeed, the most radical "deep ecologists" have grown so virulently misanthropic that Paul Watson, the head of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, called humans "the AIDS of the earth," requiring "radical invasive therapy" in order to reduce the population of the earth to under a billion.

As for "plant rights," if the Swiss model spreads, it may hobble biotechnology and experimentation to improve crop yields. As an editorial in *Nature News* put it:

> The [Swiss] committee has . . . come up with few concrete examples of what type of experiment might be considered an unacceptable insult to plant dignity. The committee does not consider that genetic engineering of plants automatically falls into this category, but its majority view holds that it would if the genetic modification caused plants to "lose their independence"—for example by interfering with their capacity to reproduce.

One Swiss scientist quoted in the editorial worried that "plant dignity" provides "another tool for opponents to argue against any form of plant biotechnology" despite the hope it offers to improve crop yields and plant nutrition.

What folly. We live in a time of cornucopian abundance and plenty, yet countless human beings are malnourished, even starving. In the face of this cruel paradox, worry about the purported rights of plants is the true immorality. ♦



MICHAEL RAMIREZ

THE WRIGHT STUFF.

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An Exceedingly Strange New Respect

Hillary Clinton makes friends in some surprising precincts

By Noemie Emery

"Strange new respect" is the term coined by Tom Bethell, an unhappy conservative, to describe the press adulation given those who drift leftward, those who grow "mature," "wise," and "thoughtful" as they cause apoplexy in right-wingers, and leave their old allies behind. But no new respect has been quite so peculiar as that given by some on the right to Hillary Clinton—since 1992 their ultimate nightmare—whose possible triumph in this year's election has been the source of their most intense fear. Lately, however, a strange thing has happened: A tactical hope to see her campaign flourish—to keep the brawl going and knock dents in Obama—has changed to, at least in some cases, a grudging respect for the lady herself. Actually, they may not have changed quite so much as she has (who knows, perhaps merely changed in her image and tactics), but the Hillary of May 2008 is radically different from the Hillary of two months ago, much less the one of last year, or of eight years back. And this one (at least till the nomination is settled) has some traits the right wing can love.

First of all, she is tough. Boy, is she tough. Next to John McCain's torture and FDR's polio (or John Kennedy's terrible health and PT-109 put together), she has arguably been through more harrowing times than any major contender in history. Hillary may not have been tortured for six years by the North Vietnamese, but her marriage to Bill could have seemed the equivalent, and surely her life since the start of this year has been torturous in the extreme. One of the problems that conservatives had with Hillary before this is that she often seemed to be playing the victim, trying to use unearned power, looking for outs and excuses, trying to have things both ways. As first lady, she seemed to think that she and Bill had both been elected and she had a right to half of his power, which she used, sometimes misused, but didn't want to answer for. When criticized, she tried to evade the accounting by saying she was only the wife.

She campaigned hard and diligently when she ran for the Senate, but she was elected largely as a reward for her personal suffering, and she had behind her (which Al Gore resented) the full force of the White House publicity and patronage organization and an overwhelming advantage in funds. Again, she was a diligent senator, but the only reason she entered the 2008 race as the Democratic frontrunner was the presence of the machine built up by her husband, the web of backers and donors and favors a two-term president has at his disposal, and the president himself, thought at the time to be a master campaigner. She was invincible. She was inevitable. She was proceeding unperturbed to a largely unearned coronation. But that was then.

Fast forward two months into the new year and into the contest, and suddenly all this was gone: Barack Obama had the Big Mo and the huge cash advantage, Bill Clinton had become a distinctly mixed blessing, and old "friends" and backers had run for the hills, fleeing the ship that they assumed to be sinking and jumping onto the sleeker new frigate nearby. Each day brought another instance of treachery and/or self-preservation. Old allies deserted, the press now assailed her. The Kennedys, who once fêted her and her mate during happier days on the Vineyard, bestowed their fraying prestige upon her opponent. Obama was the new JFK, the new RFK, or, some even implied, the messiah. She was the obstacle, the impediment, the residue of past scandals; the woman who was in the way.

One observer once said that the main importance of PT-109 in the life of John Kennedy was that it was the only time in his life (until he was murdered) when the power and wealth of his father couldn't help him at all. Hillary in February 2008, after Obama's stunning string of 10 victories, was like JFK in the water—everything she was used to relying on had proved to be

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My Blue-Collar Adventure!

Quaffing a brewski with my new pals!

Breaking out the hard stuff – hey, I'm game!

useless, except that in her case the people around her kept trying to hold her head under, insisting it was for her, and of course for the party's, own good. In these dire straits, Hillary channeled her inner survivor, and, like John Kennedy, became a Gut Fighter writ large. She fought her way to an island, dragging her crew mates behind her, fed them on coconuts, and sent word for rescue. And then it came. "This one's for you!" she cried out to her base in hard-pressed Ohio as she pulled out the Big One, to their riotous cheers.

It was about this time that her presentation, and her persona, underwent notable change.

After March 4, she suddenly seemed to look and sound different: She began to seem real. The shrillness was gone, and so was The Cackle, and so were the forced southern accents that once caused so many so much merriment. Hillary!—whoever that was—never really cohered as a character; her previous poses—the Perfect Wife, the Aggrieved Wife, the Empress-in-Waiting—were all unconvincing, but in her new role—the scrapper, forced to the wall, and hanging in there with ferocious and grim resolution—she is suddenly all of a piece. Along with her inner JFK, she has channeled her inner Robert F. Kennedy (going back to the days when he was still "ruthless"), along with her inner Margaret Thatcher—"No time to go wobbly"—along with echoes of the John McCain who clawed his way out of the grave only last winter, and the George W. Bush who just as tenaciously saved his Iraq policy—and maybe Iraq itself—from the Democrats in Congress last year.

It is no accident that it was just at this juncture that she began to rouse outrage in parts of what once was her base. It is a truism that liberals think people are formed by exterior forces around them and are helpless before them, while conservatives think individuals make their own destiny. Liberals love victims and want them to stay helpless, so they can help them, with government programs; while conservatives love those who refuse to be victims, and get up off the canvas and fight. Hillary may still be a nanny-state type in some of her policies, but in her own life she seems more and more of a Social Darwinian, refusing to lose, and insisting on shaping her destiny. If the fittest survive, she intends to be one of them. This takes her part of the way towards a private conversion. She is acting like one of our own.

If this weren't enough to make right-wing hearts flutter, Hillary has another brand-new advantage: She is hated on all the right fronts. The snots and the snark-mongers now all despise her, along with the trendies, the glitzies; the food, drama, and lifestyle critics, the beautiful people (and those who would join them), the Style sections of all the big papers; the slick magazines; the above-it-all pundits, who have looked down for years on the Republicans and on the poor fools who elect them, and now sneer even harder at her. The *New York Times* is having hysterics about her. At the *New Republic*, Jonathan Chait (who inspired the word "Chaitred" for his pioneer work on Bush hatred) has transferred his loathing of the 43rd president intact and still shining to her. "She should now go gentle into the political night," he advised in January. "Go Already!" he repeated in March, when she had failed to act on his suggestion. "No Really, You Should Go," he said in April after she won Pennsylvania, which made her even less likely to take his advice. "Now that loathing seems a lot less irrational," he wrote of the right wing's

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"Welcome to Wal-Mart, Welcome to Wal-Mart"... Ha-ha!

Well-fed white chicks – Who says I don't fit in?

prior distaste for both the Clintons. "We just really wish they'd go away."

And what caused this display of intense irritation? She's running a right-wing campaign. She's running the classic Republican race against her opponent, running on toughness and use-of-force issues, the campaign that the elder George Bush ran against Michael Dukakis, that the younger George Bush waged in 2000 and then again against John Kerry, and that Ronald Reagan—"The Bear in the Forest"—ran against Jimmy Carter and Walter F. Mondale. And she's doing it with much the same symbols.

"Clinton became the first Democratic candidate to wave the bloody shirt of 9/11," the *New York Times* has been whining. "A Clinton television ad, torn right from Karl Rove's playbook, evoked the 1929 stock market crash, Pearl Harbor, the Cuban missile crisis, the cold war, and 9/11 attacks, complete with video of Osama bin Laden . . . declaring in an interview with ABC News that if Iran attacked Israel while she were president," she would wipe the aggressor off the face of the earth. "Clinton is saying almost exactly the same things about Obama that McCain is," Chait lamented: "He's inexperienced, lacking in substance," unprepared to stand up to the world. She has said her opponent is ill-prepared to answer the phone, should it ring in the White House at three in the morning. Her ads are like the ones McCain would be running in her place, and they'll doubtless show up in McCain's ads should Obama defeat her. She has said that while she and McCain are both prepared to be president, Obama is not. They act, he makes speeches. They take heat, while he tends to wilt or to faint in the kitchen. He may even throw like a girl.

And better—or worse—she is becoming a social conservative, a feminist form of George Bush. Against an opponent who shops for arugula, hangs out with ex-Weathermen, and says rural residents cling to guns and to God in unenlightened despair at their circumstances, she has rushed to the defense of religion and firearms, while knocking back shots of Crown Royal and beer. Her harsh, football-playing Republican father (the villain of the piece, against whom she rebelled in earlier takes on her story) has become a role model, a working class hero, whose name she evokes with great reverence. Any day now, she'll start talking Texan, and cutting the brush out in Chappaqua or at her posh mansion on Embassy Row.

In the right-wing conspiracy, this adaptation has not gone unobserved. "Hillary has shown a Nixonian resilience and she's morphing into Scoop Jackson," runs one post on *National Review*'s blog, The Corner:

> She's entering the culture war as a general. All of this has made her a far more formidable general election candidate. She's fighting the left and she's capturing the center. She's denounced MoveOn.org. She's become the Lieberman of the Democratic Party. The left hates her and treats her like Lieberman. . . . Obama is distancing himself from Wright and Hillary is getting in touch with O'Reilly. The culture war has come to the Democratic Party.

She might run to the right of McCain, if she makes it to the general election, and get the votes of rebellious conservatives. Or she, Lieberman, and McCain could form a pro-war coalition, with all of them running to pick up the phone when it rings in the small hours. The *New York Times* and the rest of the left would go crazy. Respect can't get stranger than that. ♦

MIDDLE-RIGHT, AP / JOURNAL GAZETTE; OTHERS, AP / CAROLYN KASTER

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Just Like Us! Really?

Gallup says only 7 percent of the world's Muslims are political radicals. Yet 23 percent think the 9/11 attacks were in some way justified.

By Robert Satloff

On the inside back cover of books published by Gallup Press there is the following breathtaking statement:

> Gallup Press exists to educate and inform the people who govern, manage, teach and lead the world's six billion citizens. Each book meets Gallup's requirements of integrity, trust and independence and is based on a Gallup-approved science and research.

Don't be distracted by the bad grammar. Focus instead on Gallup's "requirements of integrity, trust and independence." Thanks to a remarkable admission by a coauthor of Gallup's new bestseller *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*, we are now able to know precisely what Gallup's "requirements" really are.

Who Speaks for Islam? is written by John L. Esposito, founding director of Georgetown University's Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, and Dalia Mogahed, executive director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies. As the authors state at the outset, the book's goal is to "democratize the debate" about a potential clash between Western and Muslim civilizations by shedding light on the "actual views of everyday Muslims"—especially the "silenced majority" whose views Esposito and Mogahed argue are lost in the din about terrorism, extremism, and Islamofascism.

This majority, they contend, are just like us. They pray like Americans, dream of professional advancement like Americans, delight in technology like Americans, celebrate democracy like Americans, and cherish the ideal of women's equality like Americans. In fact, the authors write, "everyday Muslims" are so similar to ordinary Americans that "conflict between the Muslim and Western communities is far from inevitable."

Similar arguments have been made before; some of this is true, some is rubbish, much is irrelevant. The real debate about the "clash of civilizations" is about whether a determined element of radical Muslims could, like the Bolsheviks, take control of their societies and lead them into conflict with the West. The question often revolves around a disputed data point: Of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims, how many are radicals? If the number is relatively small, then the fear of a clash is inflated; if the number is relatively large, then the nightmare might not be so outlandish after all.

What gives *Who Speaks for Islam?* its aura of credibility is that its answers are allegedly based on hard data, not taxi-driver anecdotes from a quick visit to Cairo. The book draws on a mammoth, six-year effort to poll and interview tens of thousands of Muslims in more than 35 countries with Muslim majorities or substantial minorities. The polling sample, Esposito and Mogahed claim, represents "more than 90 percent of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims." To back up the claim, the book bears the name of the gold-standard of American polling firms, Gallup.

The answer to that all-important question, the authors say, is 7 percent. That is the percentage of Muslims who told pollsters that the attacks of September 11, 2001, were "completely" justified and who said they view the United States unfavorably—the double-barreled litmus test devised by Esposito and Mogahed to determine who is radical and who isn't.

The authors don't actually call even these people "radicals," however; the term they use is "politically radicalized," which implies that someone else is responsible for turning these otherwise ordinary Muslims into bin Laden sympathizers. By contrast, Muslims who said the 9/11 attacks were "not justified" they term "moderates."

More than half the book is an effort to distinguish the 7 percent of extremist Muslims from the "9 out of 10," as they say, who are moderates and then to focus our collective

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'Moderate' Palestinians celebrate the terrorist attacks on the United States at the Shatila refugee camp in Beirut on September 11, 2001.

AFP PHOTO / RAMZI HAIDAR

efforts on reaching out to the fringe element. With remarkable exactitude, they argue: "If the 7 percent (91 million) of the politically radicalized continue to feel politically dominated, occupied and disrespected, the West will have little, if any, chance of changing their minds." There is no need to worry about the 93 percent because, as Esposito and Mogahed have already argued, they are just like us.

There is much here to criticize. The not-so-hidden purpose of this book is to blur any difference between average Muslims around the world and average Americans, and the authors rise to the occasion at every turn. Take the very definition of "Islam." From Karen Armstrong to Bernard Lewis—and that's a pretty broad range—virtually every scholar of note (and many who aren't) has translated the term "Islam" as "submission to God." But "submission" evidently sounds off-putting to the American ear, so Esposito and Mogahed offer a different, more melodious translation—"a strong commitment to God"—that has a ring to it of everything but accuracy.

Or take the authors' cavalier attitude to the word "many." How many is many? Thirty percent of the vote won't get Hillary Clinton nominated for president, but it would be a lot if the subject were how many Americans cheat on their taxes or beat their wives. At the very least, one might expect a book based on polling data to be filled with numbers. This one isn't. Instead, page after page of *Who Speaks for Islam?* contains such useless and unsourced references as "many respondents cite" this or "many Muslims see" that.

Or take the authors' apparent indifference to facts. Twice, for example, they cite as convincing evidence for their argument poll data from "the ten most populous majority Muslim countries," which they then list as including Jordan and Lebanon, tiny states that don't even rank in the top 25 of Muslim majority countries. Twice they say their 10 specially polled countries collectively comprise 80 percent of the world Muslim population; in fact, the figure is barely 60 percent.

These problems would not matter much if the book gave readers the opportunity to review the poll data on which Esposito and Mogahed base their judgments. Alas, that is not the case. Neither the text nor the appendix includes the full data to a single question from any survey taken by Gallup over the entire six-year period of its World Poll initiative. We, the readers, either have to pay more than $20,000 to Gallup to gain access to its proprietary research or have to rely on the good faith of the authors.

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Or, more accurately, we have to rely on Gallup's good name—the "integrity, trust and independence" cited above. Public comments by Mogahed at a luncheon I hosted at the Washington Institute on April 17 show exactly what that is worth.

Here's the context: As the event was about to close, Mogahed was pressed to explain the book's central claim that radicals constitute 7 percent of the world's Muslim population. A questioner focused on the critical distinction between the 7 percent of respondents who said the 9/11 attacks were "completely justified" and the other 93 percent. How many of those 93 percent, Mogahed was asked, actually answered that the attacks were "partly," "somewhat," or even "largely" justified? Were those people truly moderates?

In her answer, transcribed below, Mogahed refers in pollster code to numbers ascribed to the five possible answers to the poll question about justifying 9/11. Although she and Esposito never discuss the details of this question in their book, they did expound on them in a 2006 article in *Foreign Policy* magazine, which described a five-point scale in which "Ones" are respondents who said 9/11 was "totally unjustified" and "Fives" those who said the attacks were "completely justified."

In that article, she and Esposito wrote: "Respondents who said 9/11 was justified (4 or 5 on the same scale) are classified as radical." In the book they wrote two years later, they redefined "radical" to comprise a much smaller group—only the Fives. But in her luncheon remarks, Mogahed admitted that many of the "moderates" she and Esposito celebrated really aren't so moderate after all.

> MOGAHED: I can't off the top of my head [recall the data], but we are going to be putting some of those findings in our [updated] book and our website.
>
> To clarify a couple of things about the book—the book is not a hard-covered polling report. The book is a book about the modern Muslim world that used its polling to inform its analysis. So that's important: It's meant for a general audience, and it's not meant to be a polling report. One very important reason why is because Gallup is selling subscriptions to its data. We are a for-profit company; we are not Pew. We are Gallup. So this isn't about . . . it was not meant for the data to be free since we paid $20 million to collect [the data] . . . that we paid all on our own. So just to clarify that . . .
>
> So, how did we come up with the word "politically radicalized" that we unfortunately used in the book? Here's why: because people who were Fives, people who said 9/11 was justified, looked distinctly different from the Fours . . . At first, before we had enough data to do sort of a cluster analysis, we lumped the Fours and Fives together because that was our best judgment.
>
> QUESTIONER: And what percent was that?
>
> MOGAHED: I seriously don't remember but I think it was in the range of 7 to 8 percent [actually, 6.5 percent].
>
> QUESTIONER: So it's seven Fours and seven Fives?
>
> MOGAHED: Yes, we lumped these two and did our analysis. When we had enough data to really see when things broke away, here's what we found: Fives looked very different from the Fours, and Ones through Fours looked similar. [Mogahed then explained that, on another question, concerning suicide bombing, respondents who said 9/11 was only partially justified clustered with those who said it wasn't justified at all.] And so the Fives looked very different; they broke, they clustered away, and Ones through Fours clustered together. And that is how we decided to break them apart and decided how we were to define "politically radicalized" for our research.
>
> Yes, we can say that a Four is not that moderate . . . I don't know. . . .You are writing a book, you are trying to come up with terminology people can understand. . . . You know, maybe it wasn't the most technically accurate way of doing this, but this is how we made our cluster-based analysis.

So, there it is—the smoking gun. Mogahed publicly admitted they knew certain people weren't moderates but they still termed them so. She and Esposito cooked the books and dumbed down the text. Apparently, by the authors' own test, there are not 91 million radicals in Muslim societies but almost twice that number. They must have shrieked in horror to find their original estimate on the high side of assessments made by scholars, such as Daniel Pipes, whom Esposito routinely denounces as Islamophobes. To paraphrase Mogahed, maybe it wasn't the most technically accurate way of doing this, but their neat solution seems to have been to redefine 78 million people off the rolls of radicals.

The cover-up is even worse. The full data from the 9/11 question show that, in addition to the 13.5 percent, there is another 23.1 percent of respondents—300 million Muslims—who told pollsters the attacks were in some way justified. Esposito and Mogahed don't utter a word about the vast sea of intolerance in which the radicals operate.

And then there is the more fundamental fraud of using the 9/11 question as the measure of "who is a radical." Amazing as it sounds, according to Esposito and Mogahed, the proper term for a Muslim who hates America, wants to impose Sharia law, supports suicide bombing, and opposes equal rights for women but does not "completely" justify 9/11 is . . . "moderate."

Could the smart people at Gallup really believe this? Regardless, they should immediately release all the data associated with their world poll and open all the files and archives of their Center for Muslim Studies to independent inspection. With a dose of transparency and a dollop of humility, the data just might teach something useful to the world's six billion citizens. ♦

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Advice for the Nuclear Abolitionists

Yes, Ronald Reagan wanted to rid the world of nuclear weapons, but he was a stickler for verification.

By Henry Sokolski & Gary Schmitt

In the old TV commercials for the E.F. Hutton brokerage firm, conversations would come to a screeching halt when someone dropped the Hutton name, and everyone would lean in to hear what E.F. Hutton was advising. The tagline: "When E.F. Hutton talks, people listen." The Washington version of this is now playing. In January 2007 and again this year, the *Wall Street Journal* published an article on its influential opinion page calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. What is most remarkable about these two articles is their joint bylines: Sam Nunn, William Perry, George Shultz, and Henry Kissinger. Sam Nunn is a former chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Bill Perry was secretary of defense in the Clinton administration; both are men respected for their common sense and relatively hawkish approach to security affairs. And of course George Shultz and Henry Kissinger are former secretaries of state for presidents (Reagan, Ford, and Nixon) not known for seeing the world through rose-tinted glasses.

Given the authors' reputations, their recommendations will be taken seriously and could well become points of departure for a fundamental change in U.S. security policy when a new administration enters office next January. When Nunn, Perry, Shultz, and Kissinger talk, people listen. But are they listening as carefully as they should?

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REUTERS / PAKISTAN MILITARY DEPARTMENT

A Pakistani missile, with a reported range of up to 930 miles, is test-fired in May, 2004.

A ROAD TO ZERO?

The ultimate goal, Nunn and company argue, is to reach a world in which nuclear weapons no longer exist. Short of that, in the interim, there should be as few of these weapons as is possible. Unless the measures they outline to reach that goal are adopted, they conclude, we will live in a far more dangerous world, in which nuclear proliferation is the norm and a policy of nuclear deterrence may no longer be viable.

Nunn and company recommend several U.S.-Russian arms control undertakings. The *Wall Street Journal* pieces focused on proposals to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, extend key provisions of the START I (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) agreement of 1991, reduce tactical nuclear weapons deployments, and develop joint European theater missile defenses with Russia. All of these are primarily bilateral efforts between Moscow and Washington, designed to reduce the size and readiness of U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals and to manage the future of our strategic forces.

Much of what they recommend in this area is already declared U.S. and Russian

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policy. And what isn't—for example, turning the existing nuclear testing and military fissile production moratoriums into legally binding treaties—is judged to be unverifiable not only by arms control skeptics, but by the State Department's own Bureau of Verification, Compliance and Implementation. More to the point, the specific proposals to cap "vertical" proliferation (great powers expanding their existing arsenals) have little or nothing to do directly with the problem of "horizontal" proliferation (the spread of nuclear weapon technology to nonnuclear states). Yet it is the latter that is the key nuclear threat we now face.

Russian cooperation on nonproliferation, for example, has never been tied to its calculations about the strategic balance between the United States and itself. Nor is there evidence that reductions in nuclear weapon stockpiles on the part of Moscow and Washington have had a significant impact on the strategic desires of third countries, like North Korea or Iran, to acquire weapons or of countries, such as Libya, Ukraine, and South Africa, to reverse course and get out of the nuclear weapon business.

As for the argument that these measures might allow the United States to come to global nonproliferation issues from the moral high ground—having shown it is serious about reducing its own stock of nuclear weapons—the reality is that neither Russia nor China (let alone India, Pakistan, or Israel) is ever likely to give up its nuclear arsenal entirely. Any state that has conventional forces inferior to its key adversaries or possible competitors will view its nuclear capability as a strategic life insurance policy. Conversely, states such as Mexico, Egypt, and South Africa, are unlikely to be impressed with any arms control "progress" that falls short of total nuclear disarmament. Renewed efforts on the arms control front with Moscow may have benefits in bilateral relations, but creating substantial momentum on the global nonproliferation front is unlikely to be one of them.

DETERRENCE'S END?

In their push for disarmament, Nunn and company appear to throw cold water on the future viability of nuclear deterrence. In their latest *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, for example, they remarked that the steps the United States and rest of the world are "taking now to address" the threat of proliferation "are not adequate to the danger. With nuclear weapons more widely available, deterrence is decreasingly effective and increasingly hazardous."

It certainly is true that the greater the number of nuclear weapons states, the more difficult it is to defend one's interests and guarantee the security of allies. And it is also true that we need to take nuclear proliferation more seriously and that the steps we have taken so far to reduce the threat are insufficient. Yet arguing that deterrence is "increasingly hazardous" for U.S. and allied security is at the least premature and at worst misleading. Few, for example, would argue that the United States should terminate existing nuclear security guarantees to Japan, South Korea, Australia, or NATO. And there is good reason: Doing so would only encourage more proliferation, among both friends and adversaries and increase the chances that serious disputes would escalate into war.

Nor is it the case that "superpower" arsenals have been a roadblock to addressing the danger of proliferation. Since the Cuban Missile Crisis, the United States has dramatically reduced the aggregate yield and number of deployed warheads in its nuclear arsenal. And today, few would question the desirability of continuing to follow the logic of military science, which through precision guidance and other revolutions in the fields of computation, sensors, and software is making America's and Russia's potential use of indiscriminate weapons, e.g., nuclear weapons, far less likely or necessary.

Over the last four decades, the United States and Russia have both heeded this logic; they have reduced their stockpiles, the yields of the weapons they retain, and the numbers deployed by more than three quarters. Beyond recommending the substitution of lower yield and nonnuclear weapons for existing nuclear bombs, this logic also allows us to secure arms understandings with the Russians and others to visibly reduce the world's reliance on nuclear weapons to maintain security. Where this can be done within reasonable bounds of verifiability—as in START and SORT, the strategic arms reduction treaty signed by Bush and Putin in 2002—we have done so. Where verification has been less certain—as in the comprehensive test ban treaty and the fissile material cutoff treaty, which would ban further production of uranium and plutonium for weapons—we have used mutual announcements of national policy to promote such efforts politically.

That said, America's nuclear guarantees still matter and have served to keep other states from going nuclear themselves. The problem is that with more nuclear or near-nuclear nations, the chances for war and strategic miscalculation increase, even with such nuclear guarantees. This suggests the need to think through the effective steps that can be taken to stem nuclear proliferation, rather than focusing on symbolic Cold War-style arms control measures or prematurely abandoning deterrent postures that have actually served the cause of nonproliferation.

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A military parade in Pyongyang, North Korea, 2007

REUTERS / KOREA NEWS SERVICE

STEMMING PROLIFERATION?

The few proposals put forward by Nunn, Perry, Shultz, and Kissinger that are specifically tailored to address the problem of nuclear proliferation are likely to be ineffective or may actually compound the proliferation challenges we face. One such proposal is to adopt a treaty that would cut off the production of plutonium and other fissile material for military purposes. A fissile material cutoff treaty (FMCT) would permit any state that now has nuclear weapons to enrich uranium and reprocess plutonium so long as this activity served nonmilitary purposes and was internationally monitored. The goal would be to cap current stockpiles of fissile material being used by weapon states for military programs and, in turn, presumably lessen the possibility of leakage from either the civilian or military stockpile.

Unfortunately, whatever increase in safety one might gain by tightening controls over dedicated weapons material production, one loses in allowing fissile production for peaceful purposes, because it is impossible to ensure such programs remain "peaceful." There is no safeguards program that can reliably detect a covert weapons program, deter an abrupt diversion of civilian fuel production into a military program, or adequately account for what nuclear fuel plants produce.

But the more important problem from a nonproliferation point of view is that would-be nuclear states will use the FMCT framework to reassert *their* right under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to have a fuel production cycle, as long as it is internationally monitored. And if monitored fuel production for "civilian" energy is legitimate for weapon states, why not for non-weapon states, as well? What's good for the goose is good for the gander, after all. Yet it isn't. It is this "right"—asserted by Iran, for example—to have a "peaceful" fuel production cycle that has caused the current nonproliferation crisis.

Perhaps to head off this outcome, a second proposal from Nunn and company would have the advanced nuclear countries provide "reliable supplies of nuclear fuel, reserves of enriched uranium, infrastructure assistance, financing, and spent fuel management" to any country so long as it opens up its nuclear energy program to international inspections. Here the idea would be to try to entice states not to exercise their right to make nuclear fuel by making it for them, and thus avoid the kind of

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Iran flaunts a missile, just outside the Ayatollah Khomeini mausoleum in Tehran, 2007.

ATTA KENARE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

problems we now confront with North Korea and Iran.

But if history is any guide, having a large civilian nuclear energy program (with or without a declared fuel production capability) has not precluded any state from dipping its fingers in the nuclear weapons jar. Civilian nuclear energy and nuclear research programs in countries that had no declared nuclear fuel-making plants, such as South Korea, Sweden, Taiwan, Israel, and Iraq all were accompanied by nuclear weapon-related activities. There is no reason to believe that once a state has the civilian nuclear infrastructure it needs, it will forgo examining the nuclear weapons options it wants, especially if it is their "right" to do so as an adjunct to developing "peaceful" nuclear energy. North Korea's example demonstrates that you can game the NPT, get the bomb, and even be rewarded for doing so.

The suggestion that nuclear states such as the United States or Russia might provide the fuel for countries that have not yet built or acquired reactors has captured the attention of a good number of Arab states—but probably not for the reason Nunn and his coauthors would hope. These states are worried about Iran and the reliability of the American security umbrella for the region; as a result, they have become increasingly interested in developing nuclear weapons options of their own. They also understand that the smartest way to accomplish this is to follow Iran's example of developing nuclear power for "peaceful" purposes, exploiting the duality of the technology, and getting as close to acquiring a weapon as they can in order to give themselves the option of "going nuclear" if they think it necessary.

To make matters worse, backers of such proposals (including Senator Hillary Clinton and President Bush) have insisted that the fuel be made available at "affordable" or "reasonable" prices. This really means at *subsidized* prices of course, which would have the effect of encouraging even more countries to go down the nuclear road and would further complicate nonproliferation efforts.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

A paramount goal of the U.S. government should be to see that our allies (and as much of the world as is possible) begin to interpret the Non-Proliferation Treaty correctly. Most nations, and unfortunately our own State Department, mistakenly interpret the NPT

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as recognizing and protecting a country's *right* to acquire all the technology and materials related to a nuclear energy program so long as it is declared to be for civilian use only and is open to monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). What this means in practice is that, should a country so desire, it can come within days of acquiring nuclear weapons under the guise of a "peaceful" nuclear program. So long as this view of the rights and obligations of the NPT goes unchallenged, "strengthening" the NPT as outlined by Nunn, Perry, Shultz, and Kissinger will only make it more difficult to fend off nations following the examples of North Korea and Iran.

Legally, historically, and technically, there is little to support the argument that the NPT recognizes or grants a state the right to any specific nuclear technology. Instead, there is ample evidence that only the development and sharing of nuclear materials and technology that are "beneficial" (i.e., economically viable), "peaceful" (i.e., non-weapons related), and "safeguarded" (capable of being monitored to detect diversions to bomb-making in a timely fashion) are protected under the treaty.

Although Ronald Reagan favored the eventual abolition of nuclear weapons, he recognized a distinction between what he could accomplish and what was beyond his reach. He never let his hopes outpace his judgment. In particular, Reagan was a stickler for verification.

The NPT—it bears repeating—is a treaty to promote nonproliferation and the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy, not an accord to spread nuclear materials and activities for uneconomical programs or backdoor ways of acquiring nuclear weapons. What civilian nuclear energy materials and projects the NPT does support, moreover, must be "peaceful." That is, the activity and materials must not help a state acquire nuclear bombs and must be capable of being safeguarded. On all these points, the United States and other like-minded countries need to lay down clear diplomatic markers. Rather than agreeing with states like Iran that it has an unqualified right to develop any nuclear project so long as it has some conceivable civilian application and is occasionally inspected by the IAEA, Foggy Bottom needs to lead and argue otherwise.

Washington and our allies would also do well to learn the lessons of the last two decades and apply them. After the nuclear inspection gaffes in Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, we should have learned that we cannot reliably detect covert nuclear fuel-making activities. We should also have learned that declared nuclear fuel production programs, whether of uranium or plutonium, can all-too-quickly be diverted into making bombs.

A conference reviewing the NPT will be held in 2010. It is incumbent on Washington and whoever is then in the Oval Office to articulate these points in advance of the conference. To be sure, initially, these arguments may not persuade many nations. But any hope of establishing a more sensible and coherent reading of the nuclear proliferation rules will probably depend on leadership from Washington.

A second goal would be to enhance IAEA safeguards with additional funding and authority and, most important, to get the agency to speak more candidly about what nuclear materials and activities it can and cannot reliably safeguard against military diversions. The key assumptions behind the current IAEA nuclear safeguards system were made nearly 40 years ago and need updating. These assumptions include how much time it takes a country to make a bomb from various nuclear materials, how much nuclear material is needed to make a bomb, and how frequently the IAEA needs to inspect various nuclear sites in order to detect possible military diversions. In the past, IAEA inspections erred on the side of laxity, so as not to hinder the progress of nuclear power. Now, they need to be recalibrated in light of what we have learned about the increased dangers of proliferation.

It is imperative therefore that the IAEA's Department of Safeguards budget be significantly increased to enhance known safeguards techniques that work and to help develop others that might. The IAEA will not be able to undertake more aggressive inspection efforts unless it is adequately funded. More should be spent on staffing and training, wide area surveillance, near-real time surveillance, staff retention, imagery, and environmental sampling analysis. The IAEA's director general has raised the possibility of assessing a user fee on countries with civilian nuclear industries, proportional to the generating capacity of their plants. This would be the most equitable way to pay for the needed inspections. If the board refuses to adopt such reforms, it should be seen for what it is—a denial of the real problems facing the IAEA and a demonstration of lack of seriousness when it comes to addressing the agency's core tasks.

The U.S. government and like-minded states should also establish "country-neutral" enforcement measures to be imposed on states that cannot be shown to be in full compliance with their nonproliferation obligations, as

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well as on those found to be noncompliant. Rather than placing the burden on the IAEA Board of Governors or the U.N. Security Council to reach a consensus on what sanctions or new burdens to put in place with respect to the offending states, a predetermined list of sanctions should be put in place to be applied automatically until there is a consensus among the members of these bodies that the violating or suspect state has taken adequate remedial actions.

Finally, there is a pressing need to slow the spread of nuclear programs that, on their face, make no sense economically. France, the United States, and the IAEA have all quietly noted that nuclear power programs only make sense for nations with a large electrical grid, a major nuclear regulatory and science infrastructure, and proper financing. American officials rightly noted the absurd economic assumptions behind Iran's building of the Bushehr reactor, as well as its nuclear fuel-making plant at Natanz, when compared with the possibility of developing Iran's natural gas resources. Even in the United States, banks are still divided over whether to invest heavily in new nuclear power construction here, believing they need to secure more government guarantees and subsidies for projects to be viable economically. Similar discussions and analysis have taken place in Europe, with the bottom line being that some new nuclear projects should go forward, while others not.

Economic judgments and criteria, in short, are already being used by governments, private firms, and institutions in judging the merits of proposed nuclear projects. In order to project the costs of these projects more honestly—and to compare them with nonnuclear alternatives—a good place to start would be to back the principles contained in the Energy Charter Treaty and the Charter for Sustainable Energy Development. In concert, these international agreements encourage countries—including the United States, Russia, China, France, and Great Britain—to open their energy sectors to fair competition and to state the full real price of any energy option.

Would a market-fortified nonproliferation regime of this sort eliminate the problems already posed by a nuclear-ready Iran or a nuclear-armed North Korea? Unfortunately, the answer is no. Those problems can now only be dealt with by military, economic, and diplomatic pressure. But a market-fortified system as suggested above would help prevent Iran's and North Korea's patently uneconomic ploys from becoming the accepted international playbook for countries with nuclear ambitions. It should not be acceptable for countries with ready access to cheaper sources of energy such as natural gas to do an end run around the NPT by professing an earnest desire to engage in peaceful nuclear power development.

THE GHOST OF REAGAN

Sam Nunn, William Perry, George Shultz, and Henry Kissinger are hardly woolly-headed pacifists. They are men of extensive experience and well-founded reputations. Nevertheless, they are also aware that many of their recommendations are likely to be seen as resurrecting some of the disarmament community's most controversial proposals. To head off that charge, they remind readers that it was Ronald Reagan, the hawk's hawk, who "called for the abolishment of 'all nuclear weapons,'" which he considered to be "totally irrational, totally inhumane, good for nothing but killing, possibly destructive of life on earth and civilization." And then they ask what it will "take to rekindle" Reagan's vision, implying that what they have put forward is in fact an answer to that question.

But to claim fulfillment of Reagan's vision on behalf of their proposals would be a serious stretch. Although Reagan did favor the eventual abolition of nuclear weapons, he made the very real-world judgment at the Reykjavik Summit not to make that his administration's policy, because he recognized a distinction between what he could accomplish and what was beyond his reach. He never let his hopes outpace his judgment.

In particular, Reagan was a stickler for verification. Yet, several of the proposals put forward by Nunn and company—the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the fissile material cutoff treaty, for two examples—are difficult if not impossible to verify. In addition, Reagan trusted the market and would not have supported government subsidies unless they clearly enhanced a country's security. When it came to proliferation specifically, Reagan was more than willing to call on other nations to show restraint in the sharing of technologies that could threaten the United States, its friends, and the world—hence his leadership in promoting the Missile Technology Control Regime. Finally, Ronald Reagan was a "strict constructionist" when it came to legal obligations. If there were two ways to interpret an international law and one provided for greater protection of U.S. interests and international security than the other, he would certainly favor the former.

In short, if Ronald Reagan were alive today, it is far from clear that he would sign on to the agenda being put forward by his former secretary of state and his distinguished associates. He might praise their vision, but he would likely question the effectiveness of their proposals in actually tackling the problem of nuclear proliferation. The approach sketched here is more in keeping with the spirit of Reagan the actual policymaker and, while perhaps less visionary, more likely, we think, to slow the spread of nuclear weapons. ♦

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William Ravenel (right), 1954

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF WILL RAVENEL

A Hero's Life

Remembering John McCain's teacher BY KEN RINGLE

Much has been written about John McCain's presidential campaign, about his conservative ideology (or insufficient supply thereof), about his age, his military service, and his remarkable life story. Most of what's been written, however, proceeds from the assumption that McCain, for all his maverick tendencies, is at heart a politician like any other, prey to the same ambitions, vanities, temptations, and weaknesses endemic to all presidential hopefuls.

That's not the case. He's a very different animal, and not just because of his Naval warrior forebears, his indomitable 96-year-old mother, or his experiences as a POW in Vietnam—though all those obviously influenced him profoundly. A major reason he's different is a remarkable teacher we both shared in school, an incalculable shaper of mind and character named William Bee Ravenel III.

McCain has spoken often of Ravenel, and keeps a photograph of him hanging on the wall of his Senate office. In *Faith of My Fathers* he says the teacher's "influence over my life . . . was more important and more benevolent than that of any other person save members of my family." Last month, during the "biography tour" of his campaign, he returned to Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Virginia, the once all-male boarding school we both attended in the 1950s. He used most of his speech there to praise Ravenel as "one of the best men I have ever known," who "enriched my life at EHS beyond measure."

Ken Ringle, longtime reporter and cultural critic for the Washington Post, *writes from retirement.*

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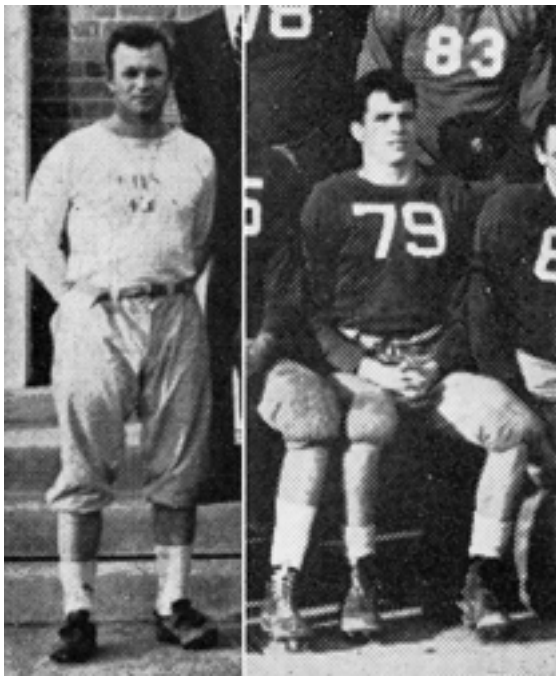
It was not simply Ravenel's academic influence that was so profound, McCain told his audience: "He helped teach me to be a man, and to believe in the possibility that we are not captive to the worst parts of our nature."

Any cynic tempted to dismiss this as campaign boilerplate should think again. In 1973, less than a year after his release from prison in Hanoi, a withdrawn McCain stood quietly in a corner at a party on Capitol Hill and told me he had returned from Vietnam desperate to see Ravenel: "He was the only person I felt I could talk to about my imprisonment," he said. "I wanted to tell him I finally understood there in Hanoi all the things he'd been trying to tell me about life. I wanted to apologize for being so stupid and to thank him for trying to reach me. But I discovered he had died"—in 1968, at the age of only 53—"and that was the hardest thing I've had to face since I got back."

Who was Bill Ravenel, and how did he so shape a possible future president?

To answer that question, it's necessary to summon up the ghost of Episcopal High School in the 1950s: a then-bare-bones, near-military boarding school where boys, many from wealthy families in the South, were sent to be taken down a peg from the country club indulgences at home and toughened into manhood with academic rigor, compulsory team sports, and cold fried eggs for breakfast. It was a bizarre kind of boot camp of the mind and soul. We slept in curtained alcoves on sagging pipe-frame bunks in aging dormitories light years from the preppy privileges of popular myth. Blackford Hall, where John McCain lived during his junior year, had been a Union hospital during the Civil War and appeared little changed since. The roaches there marched almost nightly, as numerous and aggressive as the Army of Northern Virginia.

With all that, the teachers—known as masters—were a decidedly mixed lot. One creaky and much vaunted history teacher had never even been to college. He joined the faculty immediately upon graduating from EHS in 1902 and droned away the next 53 years of his life while carefully positioning his classroom pointer in a timeless indentation in the toe of his shoe. But Episcopal *did* whip most of its charges into shape. Each year it sent graduates off to the most competitive colleges—including Yale, Princeton, Williams, and its major outlet, the University of Virginia.



Ravenel, John McCain

One of the main reasons it did was Bill Ravenel. As head of the English department, he set such rigorous standards for grammar and writing that they rule his former students to this day. He was a stocky, muscular man who carried, with his rugged good looks, a sense of coiled, but self-possessed, authority. He was one of the Charleston Ravenels of South Carolina, and was deeply and sentimentally attached to his hometown. After spring vacations there with his family he would invariably return with a wisp of Spanish moss which he would poignantly (and always futilely) attempt to transplant in a front-yard tree.

Ravenel had been a star running back at Davidson in the 1930s and held a master's degree in English from Duke. But he had also rolled across Europe less than a decade before in the 6th Armored Division of Gen. George Patton's Third Army, had received the Silver Star, and was still a lieutenant colonel in the reserve. This, together with his commanding demeanor and sharp intelligence, inspired universal respect among the boys, even those who felt victimized by the severity of his grading.

For Ravenel's passion for literature and for the ordered structure of the English language was—almost—his religion. He had never wanted to do anything but teach, had joined the Episcopal faculty before going off to war, and never looked back. He revolutionized (and greatly upgraded) the English curriculum, authored a seminal textbook on spelling and grammar known as "The Gray Gospel," and gave standardized tests so often that the College Board exams were almost familiar to his pupils when they finally came around. He instituted a writing program so ambitious that students in every English class—even freshmen—produced a serious and lengthy research paper at least three times a year, complete with scholarly footnotes and bibliography. Research at the Library of Congress was encouraged and sometimes required. All this, mind you, in high school.

Yet there was never anything of the martinet or pedant about him. Those literary terms we had to learn—simile and metaphor, dactyl and pentameter—were more than abstractions in his hands. They were analytical tools for unlocking the secrets of language and, therefore, of communication and meaning. *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* in his classes were not just plays; they were intensely human narratives with profound implications. The struggles of their characters, we came to understand, were in some sense the potential maps of our very own lives. This was serious and compelling stuff.

But as seriously as he persuaded us to take learning—or football, baseball, or any of the athletic endeavors he coached—it was always a seriousness tinged with joy. There was a kind

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of alchemy in the English language for him, and he wanted us to discover and share the wonder of making gold.

Indelibly etched on my memory is a day Ravenel opened a major window for me on this score. We were studying Emily Dickinson at the time. For an all-boys school, he saw to it that we studied an unusual number of women writers—Dickinson, Jane Austen, Amy Lowell, Sara Teasdale, Edna St. Vincent Millay—not because they were women but because they were good. The Dickinson poem I can recite to this day.

I had not minded walls
Were Universe one Rock
And far I heard his silver Call
The other side the Block—

I'd tunnel till my Groove
Pushed sudden thro' to his—
Then my face take Recompense—
The looking in his eyes—

But 'tis a single Hair—
A filament—a law—
A Cobweb wove in Adamant—
A Battlement of Straw—

A limit like the Veil
Unto the Lady's face—
But every Mesh a Citadel—
And Dragons in the Crease.

Ravenel distributed it to the dozen of us in the class, informing us only that Dickinson had been in love at the time with a married minister. Then he asked us what it meant.

Slowly and painfully, we wracked our underbooked brains and teased out the notion that she would do anything to get to her lover if the obstacle between them was merely physical. Horny 17-year-olds that we were, we didn't have to know Freud to thrill to her "groove" pushing "sudden thro to his," and he drew us to appreciate the splendid, multilayered image comparing the legal wall between them to both "a cobweb wove in adamant" and the veil (bridal? mourning?) on a lady's hat. But there we stopped. We thought we were done.

"What about the other nouns, Mr. Ringle," he said, jolting me from some daydream. "Words like 'battlement' and 'citadel'–why does she use them?"

"I guess she's just being poetic," I mumbled. "A battlement could be part of a citadel."

"You can do better than that, Mr. Ringle. *Think!* What do 'citadel,' 'battlement,' and 'dragons' have in common?"

Fairy tales? King Arthur? Mythology? I didn't have a clue. The rest of the class was similarly stumped. But Ravenel wouldn't tell us. He just stood over me, relentlessly prodding, coaxing, encouraging, nagging. He must have worked on me for 10 minutes. The entire class had stopped.

Ravenel in 1939

"Wait! They're all sort of antique words—"

"Right!" said Ravenel, as if he'd just mined a diamond. "And why is she using antique words?"

Suddenly, the sun came up: "I get it! The barrier between them, that law! She's saying it's old-fashioned!"

"Welcome to the writer's world, Mr. Ringle," Ravenel said as the bell rang ending class. "You're finally starting to use your head."

If we're lucky, most of us can remember a moment in high school or college when we stopped looking for mental handouts and began thinking for ourselves. That was mine. It was just a beginning, but it was meaningful beyond telling. I had been shown how Emily Dickinson could give us her entire life in 16 lines, but we had to meet her halfway to decode it. Literary analysis wasn't just a dry exercise; it could have human drama in it. It was an adventure in discovery.

Ravenel taught lessons like that with everything he did, from puzzling over Polonius to helping a young pitcher throw a curve ball. He believed in precision born of discipline and effort. He wanted us to understand that meaningful things rarely come easily, and that knowledge born of the liberal arts can soften life's horrors and heighten its riches. He didn't talk much, as other masters did, about pious abstractions like honor and character. He simply lived them, and did so with a unique kind of life-affirming ferocity that inspired awe as well as affection.

But Ravenel was also imbued with a particular and transcendent kind of joy, a joy born of past sadness. He was married to a coquettish Southern beauty, adored her and their four children (and a spaniel named Shakespeare), and managed to maintain a commanding sense of family even as he shared them with the 240 boys in the student body at meals in the dining room. He had a delicious wit and would needle us good-naturedly—but always, it seems in retrospect, with some sort of larger purpose. He seemed to revel in the vitality of all the young lives around him and feel a more than ordinary teacher's duty to awaken us from our green and glandular adolescent preoccupations both to the wonder and majesty of life and to the crushing weight of what it might require.

The doctor who delivered my youngest daughter, decades later, told me he decided to specialize in obstetrics after service as a surgeon in Vietnam. He'd seen so many die under his hands in the war, he said, that afterward he felt a powerful need to help life begin. It was a kind of atonement. I've often thought since that something similar must have been working on Ravenel, after all the young men he'd so recently seen die in World War II.

Masters at Episcopal were paid something appalling, like $1,000 a year, in those days; but that included a house and all meals for the entire family. It also included a certain amount of slave labor. Boys charged with "demerits" for assorted misbehaviors could "walk

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them off" mindlessly by doing laps around the school. A preferred alternative, however, was to work them off doing chores for one of the masters, 15 minutes for each demerit.

John McCain's scrappy rebelliousness inevitably garnered him even more demerits than I earned, and he usually accepted the opportunity to work them off doing yard work for Ravenel.

"Perhaps the school authorities knew . . . that Mr. Ravenel was best able to repair the all too evident flaws in my character," McCain writes in *Faith of My Fathers*. He himself never figured out how Ravenel glimpsed in him "something that few others did. But that he did take an interest . . . was apparent to all. And as he personified the ideal of every student, Mr. Ravenel's regard signaled my classmates that I had some merit despite the fact that they and I had to strain to see it."

McCain also writes, of Episcopal's students, that "none but me were sons of professional officers in the armed services." This is a rather surprising error, which speaks far more about McCain's sense of isolation in those days than it does about the school. At least six EHS students at the time were the sons of professional officers, including two in his class of 1954. Three classes below him was a grandson of General Patton.

But even though most of those boys would go on, like McCain, to the service academies, none carried near the same weight of college and career inevitability. Everybody knew McCain's father and grandfather were both admirals, and everybody knew he was headed for the Naval Academy. It was also clear to everyone, from his distaste for authority, that McCain wasn't necessarily thrilled about that. He remembers that Ravenel was "one of the few people at school to whom I . . . confessed my reservations about my destiny," and while working in Ravenel's yard, "I discussed all manner of subjects with him, from sports to the stories of Somerset Maugham, from his combat experiences to my future."

Ravenel was always reaching out, always trying not so much to instill as to bring out the qualities McCain would need in the future. He did that with all the boys, to some extent; but, former warrior that he was, he did that most of all with future warrior McCain.

Decades later, in the 1970s, after he'd recovered from his imprisonment, McCain was appointed the Navy's liaison with the Senate. One day I ran into him and asked him how he liked the work. He found it rewarding, he said, but he'd run into an infuriating obstacle. Though the Vietnam war was scarcely over, Congress was already planning to dispatch a mission to Hanoi to discuss the possibility of normalizing relations with Vietnam. The Navy wanted McCain to go along. He was shocked by that, and angry, and bitter beyond telling.

"Can you believe they are asking me to do that?" he said. "It took me six years to get *out* of Hanoi. I sure as hell don't want to go back. I'll never forgive those [North Vietnamese] bastards."

I don't remember what happened to the mission, but McCain didn't go and I heard no more about it. Until two decades later when President Clinton sought to normalize relations with Vietnam. Who was his major partner in the ultimately successful effort? Senator John Sidney McCain, R-Ariz.

I was stunned. Much of the Republican party was against the effort, as were McCain's conservative constituents in Arizona. Some accused him of treachery. Though our paths rarely crossed anymore, I called to congratulate him on what I considered a truly selfless act in the national interest, one of rare political courage. He thanked me and said that he remembered our conversation years before: "But you have to put stuff like that behind you or bitterness will eat a hole in your soul," he said. "We all have to put Vietnam behind us. All of us in this country have to become part of something larger than our own self-interest."

Where, I wondered, had he found the capacity to rise above all those years of physical and mental torture as a prisoner of war? Whose example had he followed to reach beyond a painful barrier and put an imprisoning past behind him? Now I think I know.

On May 17, 1954, less than a month before McCain graduated from Episcopal, the Supreme Court handed down the *Brown* v. *Board of Education* decision declaring unconstitutional the segregation of public schools. I was so young and naive I didn't think it was a big deal, but almost everyone else in our lily-white and very southern school did, particularly Ravenel. I remember his expression of cold fury at the decision. It would never stand, he said: Segregation was what we'd all grown up with, and that's the way things would remain.

I remember being surprised by his reaction. He was certainly no bigot (we had a few of those among the masters) and I had never seen him treat any of the blacks on the school staff—cooks and maintenance workers though they were—with anything other than the same warmth and humanity he showed for the boys. But he was from South Carolina, and I noticed that the boys from South Carolina and Alabama appeared even more hostile to the decision than those from Mississippi. When he talked of the "problem" of Episcopal playing football against soon-to-be integrated teams from District of Columbia schools, I just wrote it off to a racial blind spot born of background. I knew plenty of otherwise praiseworthy southerners with such racial blind spots, including members of my own family. Somehow, however, I had expected more from Ravenel.

Nearly a half-century later I spoke about Ravenel's blind spot with his daughter Ruthie. I had known her as a child, and she knew how much I loved her father. I told her I had always thought of him as a near-perfect man, and never could entirely reconcile that with his intransigence in the face of integration.

"You know," she said, "that was hard for him. He was a product of South Carolina in the first half of the 20th century, a product of his times. But he struggled with that as the years went by. He fought himself constantly to do the right thing, and he grew as a result. It was he who drew up the first minority recruitment program for Episcopal in the 1960s. The school is nearly 25 percent minority these days. I think William Bee Ravenel would be really proud of that." ♦

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Abbie Hoffman, Tom Hayden, Huey P. Newton

NEW YORK TIMES / GETTY; GETTY; TIME LIFE PICTURES / GETTY

Radical Revision

Reclaiming the history of the left from leftist historians.

BY RONALD RADOSH

This title does Daniel J. Flynn's fine new history a disservice. Some readers seeking a thorough and critical history of the left in America are likely to ignore it because of its claim to be a "conservative history." Flynn is certainly a conservative, as some of his candid and pithy judgments indicate, but what he gives readers is a well-rounded history of the left that should be read by anyone interested in the subject—and that includes those who call themselves left or liberal.

A Conservative History of the American Left
by Daniel J. Flynn
Crown-Forum, 464 pp. $27.50

Flynn understands what any good historian knows: "To project our ideological needs upon the past," he writes, "makes the past more the present than the past." This perspective allows him to acknowledge that "the Left has a rich, vibrant, exciting history." Its problem, as he reveals, is its inability to learn from its own past, its excesses, and its tortured history.

The left may have had European roots but, as Flynn puts it, "much of the American Left is firmly rooted in the American tradition." Those on the left who honored and worked through American democratic institutions, and who spoke the language of America, were the most successful. Think Eugene V. Debs. But very quickly others on the left condemned their brethren for not being real leftists. They invoked doctrinal purity, and pounced upon those who respected religion and considered themselves patriots.

Flynn begins his book by taking readers through a breezy and fascinating look at the early so-called Communists, builders of utopian communities such as the Englishman Robert Owen, whose American followers built New Harmony, Indiana. He moves to the Transcendentalist renegades from Unitarianism, who created Brook Farm in Massachusetts and other communities inspired by the writings of Charles Fourier. Flynn gives them credit when credit is due: The communities the abolitionist Grimke sisters created in Northampton, Nashoba, and Raritan, "stood in contrast to the racism, and indifference to it, exhibited at many other communes." Unlike revolutionaries, these socialist abolitionists "saw themselves as the conservators of the American tradition" and slavery the evil that "contradicted American values." They formed part of what Flynn calls the patriotic left, who were easily distinguished from those abolitionists, led by William Lloyd Garrison, who advocated secession and publicly burned the Constitution on the Fourth of July in 1854.

From 1848 to 1880, John Humphrey Noyes touted the creation by his Bible Communists of the Oneida Community in upstate New York. He preached col-

Ronald Radosh, adjunct fellow at the Hudson Institute, is the author of Commies: A Journey Through the Old Left, the New Left, and the Leftover Left.

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lectivism, free love, pacifism—the communal over the private. Ironically, as his community failed (just as its predecessors had), its remnants embraced the free market. They transformed the community into a corporation and made a fortune selling flatware all over the world. By World War I they were making military goods and sending their sons off to fight. The onetime Communists were now wage employers and global capitalists. They forecast socialism's collapse a century before the fall of the Soviet Union.

When the left enjoyed success, its leaders deferred to American institutions; they were religious, patriotic, and showed an entrepreneurial spirit. As Flynn points out, the Pledge of Allegiance was written by one of these mid-19th-century socialists, the brother of Edward Bellamy, whose *Looking Backward* (1888) sold an unprecedented half-million copies over 10 years. The story moves through the growth of the prairie populists, who gave voice to the plight of the farmer; and on to the emerging labor movement as industrial workers sought advances like the eight-hour day and living wages. Flynn glides through the Social Gospel to the birth of middle-class Progressivism in the 1900s.

As he gets to the early 20th century we learn of dramatic and colorful socialist leaders, like J.A. Wayland, editor of *The Appeal to Reason*, the nation's premier socialist newspaper. Wayland and Eugene Debs became the two most successful socialist leaders in American history: Their Marxism spoke in "an American voice" and, as Flynn puts it, was "unapologetically American." The socialism they preached had its spurt of growth not in the industrial East but in Oklahoma, Nevada, and Montana. A movement whose theorists posited the growth of a new society based on industrial labor soon found that the workers who they thought were the engine of history wanted nothing to do with them. The Socialist party's opposition to World War I led to repression and the departure from its ranks of influential pro-war socialists. With the Bolshevik revolution, and the demand by Lenin that American socialists follow him into the new Communist International, the Socialist party's growth in America collapsed, as many of its militants joined with Lenin to form a new Communist party loyal to Lenin's new International.

Undoubtedly, the American Communists became, from the 1930s through the late 1940s, the nation's largest and, for a time, most influential leftist movement. But they would have to wait for Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, of which they formed the far left wing, to arrive at their heyday. Under the chairmanship of Earl Browder, they preached that "Communism is 20th Century Americanism."

"Though an instrument of the Soviet Union," Flynn observes, "Browder supplied an American face and a Kansas twang to a Russian party courting the people of the United States." Their influence grew until the Cold War. Then Americans saw the truth about the would-be patriotism of American Communists: The Soviets called the shots for those who, during World War II, invoked Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln as their ideological spokesmen.

Flynn ends with the birth of the postwar New Left. The left that mattered was that of the civil rights revolution led by Martin Luther King Jr., who appealed to American tradition and to the Bible, and who compared the nonviolence he espoused with the violence of his adversaries. King may have welcomed some Communists into his movement, but he brought a majority of his countrymen to his side, in a way that the radicals such as Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael never could.

Flynn shows how the New Left quickly transmogrified into the Old Left which it supposedly had transcended. Starting out as a movement pledged to create a new "participatory democracy" based on consensus, its leaders slowly moved to adopt variants of Leninism. Tom Hayden, principal author of the Port Huron Statement (1962), the manifesto of Students for a Democratic Society, called for creation of a new "beloved community." Yet a short time later, in 1965, Hayden traveled to North Vietnam under the auspices of the American Communist party and returned to the United States praising the Vietnamese Communists for building a new "rice-roots democracy." From an opponent of the war, Hayden transformed himself into a leader of the forces who demanded victory for America's enemy, spreading the myth that Ho Chi Minh was Vietnam's George Washington. Street criminals like Huey Newton of the Black Panthers were treated as revolutionary idols, and the idealistic SDS soon became a fringe movement of radical terrorists in the Weather Underground.

Unlike other historians who have written about, and heralded, the New Left, Flynn correctly notes that the Americanism of the Port Huron Statement had been replaced by the "Marxoid jargon" of the Weathermen. And while it is true that the first generation of SDS sought to distinguish itself from both Marxism and the Old Left, Flynn shows how the SDS made the new radical terrorism possible. "Old Guard SDS," he writes, "had adopted anti-anti-Communism from the start and soon welcomed Communist members."

A Conservative History of the American Left could not have come at a better moment. Steven Spielberg recently announced the production of a motion picture about the Chicago Seven, in which Borat himself, Sasha Baron Cohen, will play Abbie Hoffman. It is the season, once again, to depict a discredited New Left as role models for today's generation of activists.

Dreams die hard, and the imperfections of our American Republic will always produce reformers and radicals, some of whom will make contributions to a better society while others will follow their predecessors in trying to bring it down. The radical can never be satisfied, Flynn argues, and will continually seek to build an unattainable paradise on earth. They are, Flynn concludes, would-be "perfectors of society" who make "an imperfect society even less perfect." The left, never learning from its own history, continually "condemns itself to replicating its mistakes, its tragedies, its failures." Or as Carl Oglesby, SDS president, tells Flynn: "Nobody learns anything from anybody." ♦

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Out of This World

An interplanetary opera with a nod to the past.

BY JOSEPH BOTTUM

It was science fiction—*science* and *fiction*, at the same time! Bad science and bad fiction, as it happens, when the whole thing was starting out. But there was a moment around, say, 1935 when the sheer idea of putting a little futuristic technobabble in a story was exciting enough that the story didn't really matter.

"Space Opera," it came to be called, and it appeared in pulp magazines with titles like *Galaxy* and *Amazing Adventures* from the 1930s through the 1950s, the now-faded newsprint covers once bright with girls in glass-bubble helmets, shrieking as the space monster's green tentacles stretched toward their shapely forms. Who will save them? Who *could* save them?

Why, the Skylark Three, of course, or Doc Smith's Lensmen, or the Legion of Space. Does anyone still read this yellowed old stuff? "Big Little Books" like *Flash Gordon on the Planet Mongo*, *Captain Future*, *Space Hawk*, *Outside the Universe*, or *Buck Rogers and the Planetoid Plot*?

No, probably not. "Space Opera" isn't really the right term for the genre. With a few exceptions, it was simply old-fashioned melodrama—and low-rent melodrama at that: *The Perils of Pauline*, set sloppily in outer space. Yes, it was one of the grandfathers of the better science fiction that came along in the 1950s and '60s. We don't get Ray Bradbury or Robert Heinlein or even Kurt Vonnegut without those melodramatic pulps. But it was, in truth, the idiot grandfather, the one who spends Thanksgiving dinner telling impossible stories while the grandchildren roll their eyes. Unless you're old enough to have read it at the time—just at the moment that it was new and you were a reader at exactly the right impressionable age—there's no reason to remember the glory days of the genre.

Space Vulture
by Gary K. Wolf and
Archbishop John J. Myers
Tor Books, 336 pp., $24.95

Happily—or, perhaps, sadly—a pair of boy readers from Earlville, Illinois, remember all too well the day they discovered space opera. They outgrew it, of course. Gary K. Wolf went on to be a writer, most famous for creating Roger Rabbit, the basis for *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1988). His friend, John J. Myers, took a different path, most famous now for being the Roman Catholic archbishop of Newark. Indeed, Myers was the youngest bishop in the United States when he was ordained in 1987 at age 46, which you'd think would give him enough to remember. But neither he nor Wolf ever quite forgot the pulps that led them to science fiction, and over the last few years, they've worked whenever they could on an attempt to recreate the genre.

The result is *Space Vulture*—half-homage and half-parody, a tale of good and evil, square-chinned heroes and superhuman villains, running loose between the stars.

As the book opens, a thief named Gil Terry has just reprogrammed the harvest robots to steal a mushroom crop from a remote planet called Verlinap. Unfortunately for Gil, Captain Victor Corsaire is hot on his trail. Victor Corsaire! Captain Corsaire! The most famous galactic marshal in the universe, and he swings down in his spaceship just in time to capture Gil and turn him over to Cali Russell, the planet's chief administrator. Cali Russell! The beautiful Cali! Talented, too, and with her two genius children, Eliot and Regin, she prepares to welcome Captain Corsaire and his dismal captive Gil.

End of story, you'd think—but melodrama never really ends, for unbeknownst to them all, Space Vulture is swooping down on the planet. Space Vulture! The "scourge of outer space," the "curse of the universe"! A diabolical villain with a "ruthless army of injustice" who promptly captures the entire population of Verlinap! The ordinary citizens he plans to sell for slaves. The beautiful Cali he intends to claim as his mistress. And the broad-chested Corsaire he fiendishly decides to offer for torture to the galaxy's worst criminals.

And all that's just Act One, the first installment of the space opera. As the curtain rises on Act Two, we discover that the thief Gil and Cali's family have somehow avoided capture. Can the boys Eliot and Regin find a way to convince the ignoble Gil to act nobly and help rescue their mother? Can Captain Corsaire escape his chains? Can Cali avoid the vile embrace of that intergalactic monster, Space Vulture?

Of course they can; of course they will. Justice and truth *must* triumph, else what's a melodrama for?

There's something a little off about the parodic elements of *Space Vulture*. It's not really fair to do parody of a genre that nobody does seriously anymore. Oh, there are plenty of modern science-fiction stories that owe a debt to the old Buck Rogers space opera: Larry Niven's *Ringworld*, for instance, and Lois McMaster Bujold's endless Miles Vorkosigan saga. But they aren't exactly like their predecessors, for readers these days demand a little better science, a little better writing, and a melodrama that's a little better hidden.

In fact, pure space opera exists today only as parody, from Harry Harrison's *Star Smashers of the Galaxy Rangers* to Douglas Adams's *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. (The best may be Jack Vance's 1965 *Space Opera*, which even involves actual opera as an eccentric heiress hires an opera company and

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sets out to bring culture to the deprived citizens of the galaxy's distant planets.) In the case of *Space Vulture* the mild parody weakens the book's homage to space opera, and the homage gets in the way of the parody.

Still, there's no getting around the fact that *Space Vulture* is a fun, quick read. The dust jacket carries praise from both Guy Consolmagno, the chief astronomer at the Vatican Observatory, and the Catholic novelist Gene Wolfe, probably the most respected science-fiction writer alive. Of course, that may owe something to John Myers's day job; science fiction-writing archbishops don't grow on trees.

But some of the praise is due. From that moment of discovery way back when in Earlville all the way down to the present, Gary Wolf and Archbishop Myers have kept alive the memory of *Space Hawk* and *Captain Future* and *Flash Gordon*. And why not? It was science fiction—*science* and *fiction* at the same time! ♦

Balancing Act

Symmetry is more than a mathematician's conceit.

BY DAVID GUASPARI

This gracefully written book is both a leisurely introduction to the mathematics of symmetry and its author's apologia: Why dedicate one's life to mathematical problems? What is such a life like?

Roughly speaking, a symmetry is a transformation of some object that leaves it looking unchanged. Marcus du Sautoy illustrates on a visit to the Alhambra, whose interior is covered with a spectacular profusion of intricate repetitive patterns: the world's most gorgeous display of wallpaper. Imagine two copies of a wallpaper pattern, one atop the other in perfect alignment. A symmetry of the pattern is any way of moving the top copy—sliding, spinning, flipping, etc.—that leaves it aligned with the bottom. If the pattern is a simple grid of squares, for example, sliding the top copy sideways by the length of one square is a symmetry. So is rotating a quarter turn around the center of any square, or flipping the top sheet upside-down by spinning it around a square's diagonal.

Symmetry
A Journey into the Patterns of Nature
by Marcus du Sautoy
Harper, 384 pp., $25.95

The collection of all an object's symmetries is a *group*, the object's *symmetry group*. (Its essence is a table showing how symmetries combine: Two quarter-turns around the same point are the same as a half-turn around that point; two quarter-turns around different points are the same as a half-turn followed by a slide.) The endless variety of wallpaper patterns gives rise to precisely 17 different groups, and objects more exotic than wallpaper give rise to infinitely many others.

Du Sautoy's visit is a mathematical life in miniature. The patterns are beautiful and the pleasures of deeper insight are compelling—of seeing, for example, how the endlessly various designs manifest a few basic forms; or the pleasure of surprise in seeing that the same form underlies designs that look quite different.

Like all mathematics, the visit is a quest, in this case a modest attempt to verify that the Alhambra's architects had (without benefit of theory) created every possible kind of pattern; that is, exemplified each of the "wallpaper groups." It's dogged by repeated failures—thinking a new group has been found but having to recant—and graced by moments of illumination, such as realizing that an elusive group has been literally underfoot all day, in the symmetries of the pavement's brickwork. And the audience for his achievement will be small, his young son growing bored long before the trip ends.

Groups can be studied in themselves, apart from what they're the symmetry groups of, and some of them play a role like that of the chemical atoms. Every group can, in a technical sense, be decomposed into atoms, which cannot be further decomposed. (Atomic groups are officially called "simple." One of my few complaints is that du Sautoy never precisely defines "group," which can be done in a paragraph, or "simple," which takes a page or two.) One of the most remarkable projects in mathematics has been the "classification of finite simple groups"—analogous to filling in the periodic table of elements.

Symmetry covers much of the same ground as Mark Ronan's *Symmetry and the Monster* (reviewed in the March 19, 2007, issue of THE WEEKLY STANDARD), surveying the wide role of symmetry in nature and human nature, and giving central place to the classification project. Du Sautoy's telling introduces work at Cambridge on the remarkable *Atlas of Finite Groups* and adds, in counterpoint, a contemporary story about his own work.

A chemical formula listing numbers and kinds of atoms does not determine the chemical uniquely because the atoms can bond in different ways. So it is with groups. Du Sautoy has spent more than a decade on the problem of how many different groups can be built using two (or three, or four . . .) copies of the same atom. It is astonishingly difficult, and solutions for particular numbers of atoms have not suggested a pattern. For even longer, he's puzzled about a pattern that leapt out of a related calculation, which *seemed* always to produce a palindrome: a sequence of numbers, such as 2,4,7,3,7,4,2, that reads the same forward and backward. Could that *always* be true?

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By the middle of the 20th century, the known simple groups could be organized into a few general families, but for five unclassifiable ("sporadic") exceptions discovered in the mid-19th century. In 1962 the monumental Feit-Thompson Theorem—255 densely written journal pages—provided tools that seemed powerful enough to complete the classification, perhaps to show that all simple groups had been discovered. Then appeared a one-page paper with another (175,560 symmetries of a 7-dimensional object) and the rush was on to make a name by finding more. Some were depressed by the prospect that this might go on without end; others, who regarded these unclassifiable oddities as gems, were exhilarated.

The *Atlas of Finite Groups* began in the mid-1970s as a huge blank ledger in the Cambridge office of John Horton Conway, who had found a spectacular sporadic group himself (4,157,771,806,543,630,000 symmetries of a 24-dimensional object). He'd done that when he was financially strapped, with three small children, after a deal with his wife allowed him to work at specified times on a much-thought-about hunch. In the very first session, a marathon of more than 12 hours, he found what he was looking for.

"I knew I was a good mathematician," he later said, "but I hadn't done the work to prove it. I'd been feeling really black for several years. . . . The discovery of this group wiped out that guilt. It removed the black feeling."

Conway—full of jokes and puzzles and mathematical games, always "on"—became a cult figure. He enlisted four other eccentrics to help systematize everything known about the finite simple groups, to create the Atlas. Of those four, du Sautoy gives the fullest picture of Simon Norton, whose favorite nonmathematical topic of conversation is bus and railway timetables. (Mathematics departments have a huge tolerance for oddity, but I can testify that his fellow graduate students, of whom I was one, found him extreme.) No one knew whether the Atlas could have a last page, or whether sporadics would go on forever. There turned out to be precisely 26 of them—no one knows quite why. The largest, called the Monster, has more symmetries than there are atoms in the sun and lives in 196,883 dimensions.

Marcus du Sautoy

By the mid-1980s the classification was complete; but for the makers of the Atlas, this remarkable collective triumph of, perhaps, 100 mathematicians was bittersweet. The book was closed. Group theory was no longer hot. Conway accepted a chair at Princeton, got divorced, became depressed, and attempted suicide. He survived, but is melancholy about growing old and the prospect of losing his powers. With Conway gone, the Atlas group dispersed and Norton became (in du Sautoy's telling) a tragic figure: "Without the political and social skills to survive the cut and thrust of the academic world, [he] was rather abandoned by everyone."

Symmetry begins with du Sautoy's thoughts on his 40th birthday—an event that makes him ineligible for the most prestigious mathematics prize, the Fields Medal—and it returns periodically to the middle-aged question, "What's it all for?" *Symmetry* ends at a conference in Edinburgh on the work of Richard Borcherds, the 1998 Fields medalist for, among other things, solving a problem of Conway and Norton. He proved their Moonshine Conjecture, which seemed as much numerology as science, asserting that certain patterns in the Monster group's Atlas entry had important connections with number theory. (The key insight came, after eight years of work, when he was stuck on a bus in Kashmir.)

The conference is buzzing about a paper on Asperger's Syndrome—a variant of autism consistent with high intelligence, whose signs include "impaired social interaction" and "all-absorbing narrow interests." Among mathematicians, its incidence is high. Borcherds noted that he had five of the six symptoms on one diagnostic list, Norton seems the classic type and, suggests du Sautoy, Conway (despite his one-way bonhomie) is a plausible candidate. Du Sautoy seems to be silently mulling the tradeoffs involved and is glad that we don't get to choose.

"Before the award," Borcherds later says, "I used to think it was terribly important, but now I realize that it's meaningless. However, I was over the moon when I proved the Moonshine Conjecture." Du Sautoy has learned that the conjecture *he* hoped to prove is false: The palindromes were charming patterns that proved deceptive. But he savors a moment of discovery like Borcherds's moment, an important advance he made while stuck on the phone, unable to reach his wife.

"Borcherds is right," he concludes. "In mathematics the real prize is not a medal, . . . but making the breakthrough on the problem you've dedicated your life to. The prize might be claimed at any time and any place: on a broken-down bus in Kashmir, on a Saturday in Cambridge at twenty past midnight, or while listening to an engaged signal on the end of a telephone line in Bonn."

If you want to know what being a mathematician is like, read this book. ♦

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Billy Graham, 1997

Reverent Billy

The meaning and message of 'America's pastor.'

BY LOREDANA VUOTO

Never mix religion with politics. But for Billy Graham, using religion to shape domestic and international affairs has been his forte, and in *Billy Graham: His Life and Influence*, David Aikman sheds much new light on Graham, the man, and his impact on America.

As Aikman shows, Billy Graham had a unique gift for captivating millions of Americans—as well as befriending presidents. In his time, Graham preached to more people around the world than anyone else, and his simple message of repentance had an "electric" effect: More than three million people who attended his crusades are said to have become Christians, and it is estimated that Graham reached a total of more than two billion people with his television and radio appearances.

Aikman outlines Graham's transformation from North Carolina farm boy to high-profile evangelist. At the age of 16 he made a "personal commitment to follow Christ" after attending revival meetings in Charlotte led by Mordecai Ham. He later majored in anthropology and entered the seminary at Illinois's Wheaton College. In 1939 Graham began his career as a Southern Baptist minister. In Florida he cofounded Youth for Christ, with evangelist Charles Templeton, and by 1949 had risen to national prominence after leading a series of crusades in Los Angeles. During the Cold War he was the first evangelist to preach to large audiences throughout Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union, and held revivals in North and South Korea, China, and Africa.

Billy Graham
His Life and Influence
by David Aikman
Nelson, 352 pp., $24.99

George Bush the elder once called Graham "America's pastor," and in the course of five decades, Graham became spiritual counselor to successive presidents, offering advice on key policy issues as well. He urged Harry Truman to fight communism in Korea; he encouraged Dwight Eisenhower to send in federal troops to Little Rock; he was a stalwart supporter of Ronald Reagan's Cold War strategy. During the Vietnam war he developed a close friendship with Lyndon Johnson that lasted until LBJ's death. Graham's frequent pastoral visits with the Bush family are said to have played a pivotal role in bringing George Bush the younger to his faith.

Graham's role as pastor to presidents came at a price, however, damaging his credibility as a faithful minister devoted to the Gospel. His closeness to Richard Nixon backfired on him during Watergate, and his reputation was tarnished when declassified tapes, released in 2002, revealed Graham humoring Nixon on the subject of Jewish influence in the media.

In his long ministry, Graham was no stranger to controversy: He was slow to publicly oppose segregation and refused, early in his career, to preach to Jews. He has often been criticized for watering down the Christian faith. Some believe this springs from what Aikman calls a "strong desire throughout his life to be liked." In 1991, when asked in a television interview to explain the Christian position on abortion, Graham replied that he was "not prepared to say what it is." On homosexuality, Graham chose to remain evasive whenever asked about it, claiming that "God loves all people."

Nearing 90, Graham no longer leads crusades or is active in his ministry. He has passed the torch to his son Franklin, who is president and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and his international relief organization, Samaritan's Purse. But as Aikman makes clear, Billy Graham changed the face of evangelical Christianity, and brought the Gospel message to tens of millions of people worldwide, including many who had historically been denied a Christian ministry. He was not a perfect human being—"I am a sinner like everyone else"—but as Aikman concludes, Christ's true followers are known by their fruits, and Billy Graham bore a great deal. ♦

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AFP PHOTOS

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'Matrix' on Wheels

Fast, fun, and loads of heart-warming monologues.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Cross Naomi Klein with Willy Wonka and you get *Speed Racer*, an Everlasting Gobstopper of a movie that probably cost $150 million, will be advertised *ad nauseam*, is already trying to seduce very young children into attending by putting toy cars in sugary cereal boxes, and still tries to give you a big, long, boring lecture about evil big-spending conspiratorial corporations.

Speed Racer
Directed by
The Wachowski Brothers

Yet I have to say there are stretches of *Speed Racer* that are absolutely adorable—a riot of color, exuberant and merry and cheerful, and so brilliantly paced and cut that it makes you want to stand up and applaud the film editors. This is what Tim Burton's version of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (the really disappointing one with Johnny Depp) should have looked like.

If I were eight years old, I would think *Speed Racer* was the greatest work of entertainment in the history of the planet, and that includes "Captain Underpants." I'm not eight, and neither are you, and unfortunately for us the pleasures to be had at *Speed Racer* in no way equal the adult sophistication that is the quiet hallmark of the Pixar pictures. But a movie this lively deserves a little credit.

Speed Racer is set in an alternate universe in which Americans still live in 1950s-style houses near cities that look like a combination of *Blade Runner*'s Los Angeles and the metropolis where the Jedi live in the later *Star Wars* pictures. They drive cars that go 400 miles an hour and jump and fly and spin and bounce into and off each other as though they were Hot Wheels on a plastic track. But Mom, played by Susan Sarandon who is pushing 60 but looks 40, still makes the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and wears cocktail dresses around the house during the daytime, like Donna Reed in her sitcom.

The plot is both too simple—will our eponymous hero win the big race?—and too complicated. It has something to do with backdoor deals among three huge corporations to control the outcome of various car races. There isn't an eight-year-old on earth, let alone a 48-year-old, who is going to be able to follow the way in which an auto rally is used to facilitate a merger at a favorable stock price. Fortunately, when the chief villain, played by the absolutely wonderful Roger Allam, delivers his lengthy monologue about the real workings of the racing business, he does so seemingly in a single breath, which gets it over with quickly.

I wish I could say the same for the sentimental monologues. Astonishingly, *Speed Racer* features five separate speeches—two of them by Susan Sarandon—in which the title character is told how proud people are of him, and how he needs to trust his feelings, and how family is the most important thing, and how they love him. Every one of these speeches is followed by a hug. The schmaltz is laid on so thick it's not entirely apparent whether it is intended seriously or whether the filmmakers are attempting a very lame parody of tender television-show moments.

It is impossible to know, because the writer-directors are the Wachowski brothers, makers of *The Matrix* and its sequels. They are recluses who will not be interviewed, one of whom lives as a submissive in a relationship with a dominatrix in San Francisco. One thing is for certain: They have terrible taste in television. *Speed Racer* is based on an exceptionally bad and weird Japanese cartoon show of the 1960s—a show so bad and weird even I wouldn't watch it as a kid, and I watched *anything*, including every episode of *My Mother the Car* (1965) starring Jerry van Dyke. The original *Speed Racer* mostly consisted of a static illustration of a boy inside a race car, and you would watch as the drawing was pulled across the screen as though it were animated. Only it wasn't.

Speed Racer was memorable not because it was good but because it was so awful. It was the animated version of the Japanese cars and television sets that flooded the United States in the years before Japanese manufacturers began to develop a decent reputation—knockoff junk that looked as cheap as its price tag. It is perverse, to say the least, to use it as source material for a major motion picture—but then, we are talking about a movie made by a dominatrix's submissive.

God only knows what the Wachowskis would do with *My Mother the Car*. ♦

John Podhoretz, editorial director of Commentary, *is* The Weekly Standard*'s movie critic.*

WARNER BROS. PICTURES

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"Jesus was a poor black man who lived in a country and who lived in a culture that was controlled by rich white people. The Romans were rich, the Romans were Italian . . ." —Reverend Jeremiah Wright

Parody

MARK 15:1-5

1 And straightaway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate. Pilate, who stood just under six feet and had wavy jet black hair, brushed straight back and curling on the sides, wore a single-breasted dark gray Armani suit, with side vents, a red Fornasetti tie, and black Risso loafers. He looked, all the scribes and elders agreed, like a million lira.

2 And Pilate asked him, "Hey, you! You call-a youself the king of the Jews, huh?" And he answering said unto him, "Thou sayest it."

3 And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.

4 And Pilate asked him again, saying, "So, what? You gonna just-a stand there and not say nothin'? You crazy or somethin'? You deaf? You not hear all-a the stuff they talkin' about you?"

5 But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marveled: "Sheesh, this guy—he's a stand-up guy, y'know? He no talk-a nobody 'bout nothin'. I no see what-a you all so upset about."

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